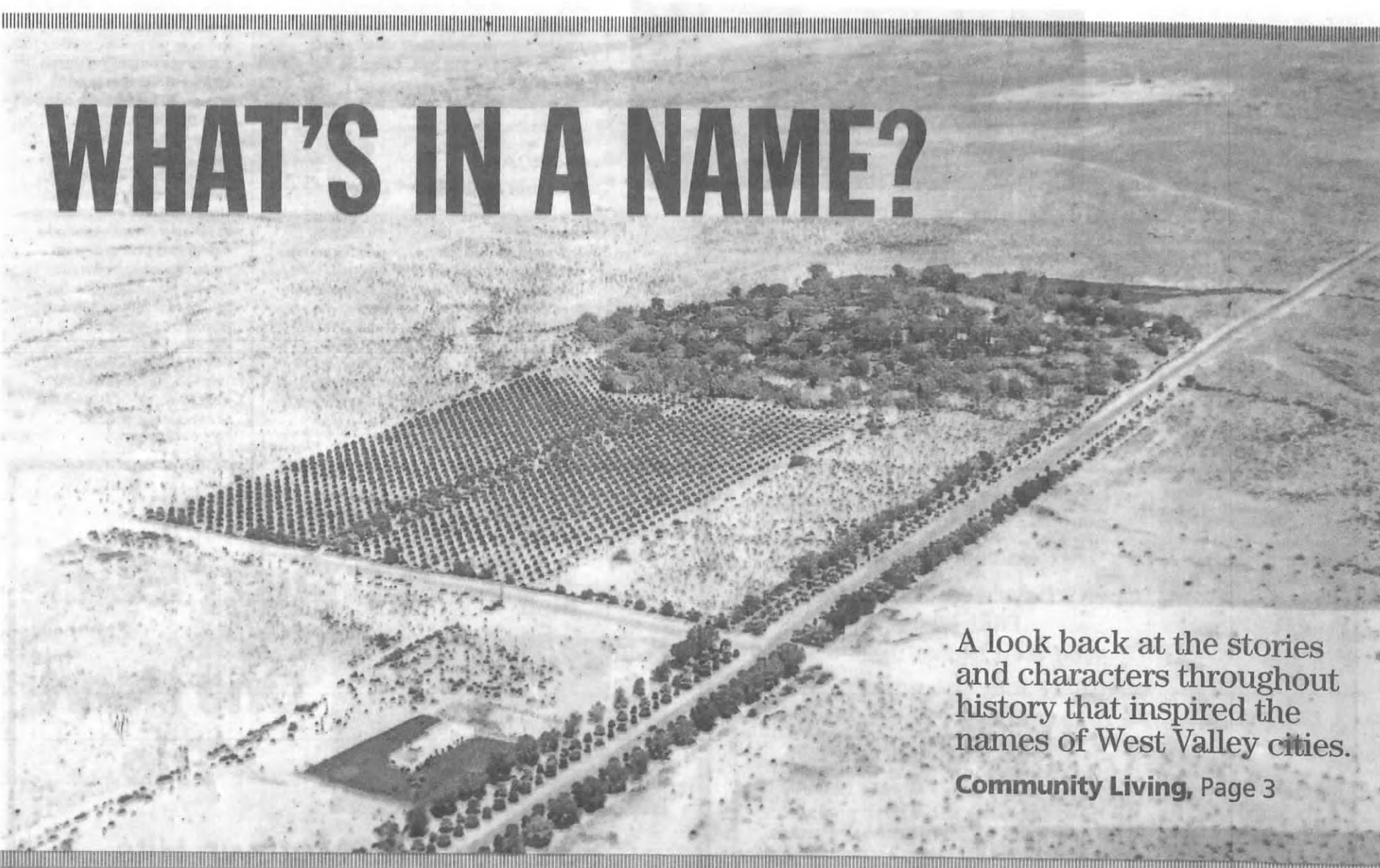


# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

An aerial photograph showing a large, rectangular vineyard with rows of grapevines. The vineyard is situated in a valley, with a road or path running alongside it. The surrounding landscape is hilly and appears to be a mix of agricultural and natural terrain.

A look back at the stories and characters throughout history that inspired the names of West Valley cities.

**Community Living**, Page 3

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# **Meet the cast of characters behind West Valley city names**

## MARK NOTHAFT

SPECIAL FOR THE REPUBLIC • AZCENTRAL.COM

What's in a name? Well, at least in Arizona parlance, apparently a lot.

West Valley cities such as Glendale, Peoria, Surprise, El Mirage, Sun City, Litchfield Park and even Tonopah all received their original monikers from someone or something, such as Del Webb naming Sun City after a nationwide contest.

"In 1955 my family moved to (the west Phoenix neighborhood of) Maryvale, coming down from the railroad town of Ash Fork," says Arizona's official state historian Marshall Trimble. "In Maryvale, named after long-time Valley developer John F. Long's wife Mary Talmachoff of Glendale, our house cost \$7,300 and the monthly payment was \$55. Hard to believe those prices today."

The West Valley has, indeed, grown up and its history is still being written. Here's a look at the back story behind the names of West Valley cities.

### Avondale

Tempe's Charles Hayden and Avondale's founding father William "Billy" Moore had a lot in common. Both supplied and serviced travelers in the 1880s, the former at Hayden's Ferry along the Salt River, and Moore at a site he called "Coldwater" along the Agua Fria River.

Moore briefly served as the area's Justice of the Peace, then established a stagecoach stop, a saloon and a general store, and was postmaster of Coldwater from 1901 to 1905, according to the Avondale Library. The post office in the early 1900s moved to a site near Avondale Ranch in what is now the old-town area of Avondale along Western Avenue. The Coldwater name was discontinued, and in 1946 the city of Avondale was incorporated.

Learn more about Avondale history from the Three Rivers Historical Society at [threerivershistoricalsocietyaz.org](http://threerivershistoricalsocietyaz.org).

### Glendale

Like many Arizona tales, water and, of course, money led to the loose formation of this West Valley city in the late See **CITIES, Page 4**



LITCHFIELD PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Litchfields often took guests at Rancho La Loma on picnic rides during their visits. In the 1920s, Paul Litchfield and wife Florence built the beautiful winter estate on the hill overlooking what would become Litchfield Park.



William "Billy" G. Moore is credited with establishing Coldcreek, now known as Avondale. CITY OF AVONDALE

### Other notable West Valley names

» Peoria – The city garnered its name from the many settlers who arrived from Peoria, Ill. Learn more at

[www.peoriaarizonahistoricalsociety.com](http://www.peoriaarizonahistoricalsociety.com).

» El Mirage – This town was originally founded in 1937 by a group of migrant farm workers on the banks of the Agua Fria River. This seeming "mirage" in the desert became an agricultural oasis.

[www.cityofelmirage.org](http://www.cityofelmirage.org).

» Tonopah – Native Americans have gathered in this area for thousands of years as evident by nearby petroglyphs. The first homestead was filed by Elbert Winters in 1916. While the origin of its name is unclear, it is thought Tonopah refers to the naturally occurring hot springs here.

# Cities

Continued from Page 3

1800s. Ambitious Civil War veteran William John Murphy left his life in Illinois as a contractor and headed west, arriving in the Arizona Territory with his wife and four children in 1880, according to the Glendale Arizona Historical Society.

Along with three business partners, Murphy built a 40-mile stretch of canal from the Salt River and Granite Reef Dam to New River, bringing irrigation water to what was once desolate open desert.

He bought up large swaths of land south of the canal, along with its water rights, and chose to name it Glendale. To recoup his expenses, he marketed the land to temperance-minded farmers and settlers looking west. A newspaper advertisement from the *Arizona Weekly Gazette* in 1892 invited the teetotalers to the "Colony of Glendale." Murphy's Arizona Improvement Company later built an 18-mile diagonal stretch of Grand Avenue to connect Glendale with downtown Phoenix to attract more residents.

The Glendale Arizona Historical Society office is located in historic Saguaro Ranch Park, 9802 N. 59th Ave., Glendale.

## Goodyear

As you might expect, the city was part of the 16,000 acres purchased in 1917 by the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company of Akron, Ohio.

According to the city website, the deal was facilitated by Goodyear executive Paul Litchfield, another important name in West Valley history, so the company could grow cotton to make rubber airplane tires during World War I.

Arizona's climate and soil were ideally suited to grow the cotton needed. The community was initially called "Egypt" for the Egyptian cotton grown there, but was later named after company founder Charles Goodyear.

Goodyear history is preserved by the Three Rivers Historical Society. Call 623-386-1397.

## Litchfield Park

The first land claims in what is now Litchfield Park were filed in 1910 by William Kriegbaum of Riverside, Calif. The 640 acres included land, which is now in the downtown area, that was initially going to be developed as citrus groves west of the Agua Fria River, according to the Litchfield Park Historical Society.

But in 1916 and 1917, the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company snapped up the original land claims and more total-



LITCHFIELD PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Paul Litchfield looks over one of his cotton fields in the 1930s. He came to Arizona to supervise Goodyear Tire's farms.

## Goodyear's influence

The historic Wigwam Resort in Litchfield Park, originally called Organization House, started as modest guest housing for Goodyear Tire executives visiting from headquarters in Akron, Ohio.

It was expanded and opened as a public resort in November 1929, and has welcomed notables such as actor Paul Newman, baseball greats Mickey Mantle and Jackie Robinson and former United States President Gerald Ford.

From 1931 to 1944, the area also was home to the test site for Goodyear auto, truck and tractor tires.

ing 16,000 acres to grow cotton for its tire products.

Paul Litchfield was sent by the company to oversee the project and Goodyear Farms, which put thousands of acres under cultivation. In the 1920s Litchfield and wife Florence built a beautiful winter estate, Rancho La Loma, on the hill overlooking the townsite.

The company town was officially named Litchfield Park in 1926.

Visit the Litchfield Park Historical Society at 13912 W. Camelback Road, Litchfield Park.

## Surprise

Nancy Alcock of the Surprise Historical Society offers up a few anecdotes. Seventy-five years ago, Flora Statler purchased and began marketing lots in a square mile in what is modern-day Surprise, an area now referred to as the Original Town Site. Her husband, Homer Charles Ludden, was born in Surprise, Neb., and moved to Glendale in 1905, which may explain the name.

However, her daughter Elizabeth Stoft claims her mother chose the name because "she would be surprised if the town ever amounted to much."

See CITIES, Page 5

## Cities

Continued from Page 4

Surprise was incorporated as a city in 1960 after an unsuccessful bid by El Mirage in 1959 to annex the land.

Surprise Historical Society is part of the Surprise Regional Chamber of Commerce located at 16126 N. Civic Center Plaza.

### Sun City

Trimble says Sun City opened on Jan. 1, 1960, in what was the cotton farming community of Marinette. It was along Grand Avenue that roughly followed the old stagecoach road from Phoenix to Wickenburg.

Sun City was the first community of its kind in the world, drawing older Americans to the sunny climate for retirement. At first it was called the Marinette Retirement Community, but after a nationwide naming contest, developer Del Webb selected the name Sun City.

Webb was nervous about its success, but sold 200 homes by the end of that first month and 2,000 by the end of the year.



WIGWAM RESORT

The historic Wigwam Resort in Litchfield Park, originally called Organization House, started as modest guest housing for Goodyear Tire executives visiting from headquarters in Akron, Ohio.

Visit the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum at 10801 Oakmont Drive, Sun City.

### Tolleson

This West Valley city's history is well-documented, founded in 1912 (the same year as Arizona's statehood) by Walter and Alethea Tolleson, and incorporated in 1929, according to the city. The family migrated to Arizona in 1908 from South Carolina, and in 1910 purchased a 160-

acre ranch for a mere \$16,000 at the intersection of 91st Avenue and Van Buren Street.

Walter Tolleson reopened the first stagecoach stop to Yuma 10 miles west of downtown Phoenix and the old "Ten Mile Store" at that southwest corner, and formed the nucleus for the founding of the town. To attract prospective residents to the viable farming community, Tolleson chartered a train and provided lunch and tours. The promotion paid off

and 80 lots at \$50 each were sold in one day.

For more information about Tolleson history, visit the city's library at 9555 W. Van Buren St., Tolleson.

### Buckeye

Thomas Newt Clanton, with a party of six men, three women and 10 children, set out from Creston, Iowa, in 1877 bound for Arizona. Clanton suffered from ongoing health problems and believed Arizona's climate would improve his condition.

The travelers settled near the area that would become the town of Buckeye, according to the Buckeye Valley Chamber of Commerce. The area received a boost with the construction of the Buckeye Canal, built from 1884 to 1886 by Malin Monroe Jackson, along with Joshua L. Spain and Henry Mitchell.

Jackson named the canal in honor of his native Ohio, known as the Buckeye State. In 1887, Clanton applied for a post office, and in 1888, the United States Postal Service granted the request, naming the new station "Buckeye" after the canal.

Learn more about Buckeye history at the Buckeye Valley Chamber of Commerce at 508 E. Monroe Ave., Buckeye.

# Street names carry history lessons

LESLEY WRIGHT

THE REPUBLIC • AZCENTRAL.COM

If you want a West Valley road named after you, it helps to be have a prominent place in Arizona history, whether as an office worker or a businessman.

Litchfield, Thomas, Dysart, Del Webb and McDowell — a Civil War general who never even passed through Arizona — all stand proud on signs for some of the region's most frequently traveled roadways. They dug canals, built sprawling ranches and developed master-planned communities.

Some local road names are quirky. Jackrabbit Trail apparently was named after great bands of the creatures that ran over the desert before houses displaced their environment, according to Nancy Alcock, president and founder of the Surprise Historical Society.

"A lot of the subdivisions still have the ranch names," she said.

Most local roads have some historical roots. Roads in the small community of Wittmann, for example, carry British names such as London Road, Norwich, Yorkshire and Montgomery. Alcock traced them back to English prospectors. They came to work the Vulture Mine in Wickenburg in the late 19th century and pined for their hometowns overseas.

Another story holds that Del E. Webb Development Co. office workers named the streets in Sun City Grand, a Surprise retirement community of nearly 10,000 homes.

A number of regional streets traverse the entire Valley. Cities such as Phoenix and Scottsdale generally follow guidelines suggested by the Maricopa Association of Governments to give north-south streets numbers and let developers choose the names of east-west routes.

In the West Valley, however, some of the major north-south roads carry the names of locally famous pioneers.

Here is the history behind roads traveled by thousands of residents every day:



GLENDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This photo from the 1940s shows the intersection of Grand Avenue and 59th Avenue in Glendale. A large overpass has since replaced the intersection. Grand Avenue was named by Glendale founder William J. Murphy.

» **McDowell Road:** Civil War Gen. Irvin McDowell (1818-85) was a stranger to Arizona. He commanded Union troops at the Battle of Bull Run and led the Army Department of the Pacific. That was enough of a legacy to give his name to Fort McDowell, a cavalry outpost near the Verde and Salt rivers, and the road that led to it from Phoenix. The fort lasted from 1865 to 1895 but the Yavapai Indian Community uses the name.

» **Thomas Road:** William E. Thomas gave his name to this road, which runs through the Southwest Valley and crosses into the East Valley. Thomas was the Arizona territorial deputy county recorder at the turn of the century and owned a ranch just north of the Phoenix city limits.

» **Camelback Road:** The road was named after the mountain that is famous for looking like a lying-down camel.

» **Bethany Home Road:** Bethany Home was a tuberculosis sanitarium operated by a religious group in the early 1900s. Doctors around the country often would send tuberculosis patients to Arizona, where they as-

sumed the clean, dry air would help them recover.

» **Glendale Avenue:** The origins of the name "Glendale" are murky, even to city historians. Founder William J. Murphy, an early developer in the Valley, needed to sell land to pay off debts he acquired while building the Arizona Canal. City records show that he used the name Glendale in marketing materials as far back as 1885. No records exist explaining why he chose the name, however. The road stretches across west Phoenix to 22nd Street, where the name changes to Lincoln Drive.

» **Bell Road:** Well known as the only major east-west route for drivers in the Northwest Valley, Bell carries the name of Harvey Bell, a farmer who helped create the Paradise Verde Irrigation District in 1916.

» **Grand Avenue:** Glendale developer William J. Murphy laid out the first leg of Grand Avenue in 1887 to attract settlers to the new colonies of Glendale and Peoria. This is a rare diagonal road in a region built primarily on grids. Grand

cuts through six communities. As it travels west of Loop 303, the road becomes more of a traditional highway and roughly follows an old stagecoach route to Wickenburg and beyond. It originally hooked up with interstate routes that ran from the East Coast to Los Angeles.

» **Thunderbird Road:** This road led to Thunderbird Field No. 1, a training facility for Allied pilots from 1939-1946. The site is now home of the Thunderbird School of Global Management.

» **Cactus Road:** This road led to the small town of Cactus, which was northeast of Sunnyslope in Phoenix.

» **Greenway Road:** Arizona pioneer John Greenway (1872-1926) was an engineer who developed the copper mine at Ajo and helped build the reputation for one of the five "C's" that make the state famous — citrus, copper, climate, cotton and cattle. He was one of Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders in the Spanish-American War and his wife, Isabella, was Arizona's first female representative in the U.S. Congress.

» **Pinnacle Peak Road:** This

Midweek 10/11/2014  
VF SC Historical Background of Sun Cities Area

is another road that traverses the Valley. Its name comes from Pinnacle Peak, a granite summit near Pima Road in Scottsdale.

» **Dysart Road:** Rancher Nathaniel Martin Dysart donated land to build the Dysart School in what was then a rural, isolated area near Surprise. It opened as a one-room schoolhouse, complete with pot-bellied stove, in 1920. He sat on the Dysart School Board until his death in 1955.

» **Litchfield Road:** Takes its name from Paul W. Litchfield, a Goodyear Co. executive. In the early 1900s, he acquired West Valley land to grow the cotton that would strengthen the company's rubber tires. He later founded Litchfield Park.

» **Deer Valley Road:** This street name came about when Phoenix held a contest in the 1940s or 1950s to pick names for regions in the city. Deer Valley won in the northern section.

» **Del Webb Boulevard:** Del E. Webb was a Valley developer who founded the original Sun City in 1960 and made the concept of retirement communities famous around the world.

» **Lake Pleasant Road:** This road runs through north Peoria to Lake Pleasant, a 10,000-acre reservoir near the Maricopa-Yavapai county line, and the Lake Pleasant Regional Park.

» **Jackrabbit Trail:** This road was named after the large bands of big-eared hares that roamed much of the West Valley before development predominated. The Sonoran Desert's antelope jackrabbit is one of the largest hares in North America and can weigh up to 10 pounds.

*Sources: Surprise: "A History in Progress" by Carol Palmer, and "Glendale, Century of Diversity" by Dean Smith and Paula Harbo; Surprise Historical Society; "Arizona Stories" and Arizona Sonora Desert Museum.*

*Compiled by Republic reporters  
Lesley Wright, Betty Reid, Michael  
Clancy, Maria Polletta and  
Srianthi Perera.*



The Kentworth featured two bedrooms, one bath, porch and patio.

## Affordable housing lures thousands

FROM DAILY NEWS-SUN FILES

**E**arlier-day model homes in Sun City were built mostly of concrete block and/or brick — solid houses put up by skilled masons who took pains and time to make durable structures.

While the building methods were largely those of the skilled-craft generation, with a lot of high paid hand labor, the prices were amazingly low.

Del E. Webb's original dream was a retirement city for people of limited retirement income. Probably the top price in the first brackets was no more than \$12,500 for a three-bedroom home.

Starting south from Grand Avenue and building first to Peoria Avenue,

then to Olive, paralleling Youngtown on 111th Avenue, Webb finished what has become known as Phase I.

As the city progressed in time and scope, so did the building methods, from prefab, modular sections to laser-leveled foundations, roof-ridges and walls.

Of the five models prospective buyers visited on Oakmont Drive, the least expensive was a two-bedroom, one-bath for \$8,500.

Sales were brisk as thousands poured into Sun City to glimpse the active retirement lifestyle marketed by the Del E. Webb Development Company.

In the first 72 hours, 237 model homes were sold and by the end of January, more than 400 homes were sold.



# Museum boasts extensive library

From Page 22

space in the West Valley, and serves a wider community through its educational outreach to school children and through such crowd-drawing and pleasing events as Artomobilia, the vehicle-themed outdoor arts show.

The museum split from Phoenix in 1980 and became a museum without walls as its collection moved from a Merrill Lynch stock brokerage office to a variety of venues in the Sun City

Eventually, with a gift of land from the Del Webb Corp., construction of its own arts structure in the Agua Fria River valley began in 1983.

An addition, the Jensen Wing, was needed by 1987, with a larger expansion in 1996.

That year, the building was significantly expanded as a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Hoover, adding new exhibit space, a kitchen and tea room for food service, and lecture hall and an outdoor courtyard, at a cost of \$1.5 million.

All of the museum's construction, from the first through today, has been undertaken with private gifts. No government grants or tax dollars have been used.

Although the area around the museum now sprouts housing and may get a shopping area along Bell Road, the museum has additional

space for expansion as needed.

A series of permanent collections, including an unusual gathering of native and national costumes, alternates with exhibitions on loan from other sources or artists, to keep some fresh material before the public at all times.

Regular lectures, too, help keep members and visitors informed about the arts.

And increasingly the museum has used its expanded quarters for arts-related programs or meetings, in a way that gives the casual visitor an opportunity to see some artworks while attending for another purpose.

The museum also houses a fairly extensive arts library.

A museum store/gift shop offers arts-related gifts including reproductions of fine arts, though only a very few from the museum's own collections.

Volunteer docents and a host of others, from the gift shop clerks to crafts teachers, keep the museum an active, busy place year-round.

The museum is closed on Monday. Admission is charged for those who are not members.

Address: 17425 N. Avenue of the Arts, Surprise, That's about a block north of Bell Road between the Sun City and Sun City West, at 114th Avenue. Phone: 972-0635.

VF SC ~~street names~~

File all under Historical Bkgy.

# City built in circles

STAFF REPORT

**L**ost in Sun City. Well, of course. Everybody gets lost in the labyrinth Del E. Webb Development Company built.

Although Maricopa County has the responsibility of maintaining and managing the 225 miles of streets, it was Devco that designed the master plan and named many of the streets.

If you're lost in Paradise, imagine the fun Del Webb had picking names for streets to reflect his enthusiasm for golf: Nicklaus Lane, Snead Circle, Hogan Drive, Palmer Lane and Pebble Beach Drive.

Other names reflect great entertainers: Welk Drive and Crosby Circle.

Still other names have their roots in people who were involved in the evolution of Sun City:

● Abbott Avenue was named after Field Abbott, one of Sun City's first golf professionals.

● Hutton Drive was named after Don Hutton, a county planning director in the early 1970s.

● Lindgren Avenue was named after Albert Lindgren, chairman of the county planning board from 1971 to 1973.

● Meade Drive was named after George Meade, organizer of the Sun City Fire District.



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO

Although the streets of Sun City are a labyrinth for many, Del Webb officials said Sun City was built in circles to give the community a unique look.

● Coggins Drive was named after the designer of Sun City's first golf course, South.

● Burr Welch Drive was named after one of the founders of Boswell Hospital.

● Inwood Court was named after Louis Inwood, the first president of the Sun City Civic Association, now the Home Owners Association.

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## History Highlights

# Sock-it-to-me Sixties

**T**he library started Feb. 5, 1962, as a shoe-box operation in an 820-square-foot room known as Town Hall Center.

Before that, the Maricopa County Library had been providing a weekly Bookmobile service to Sun City.

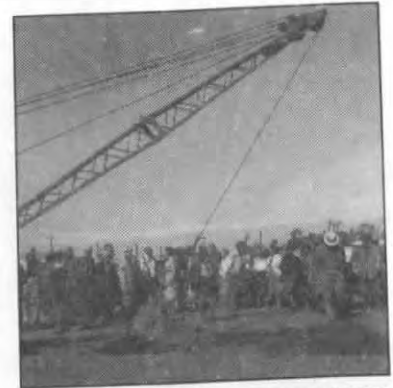
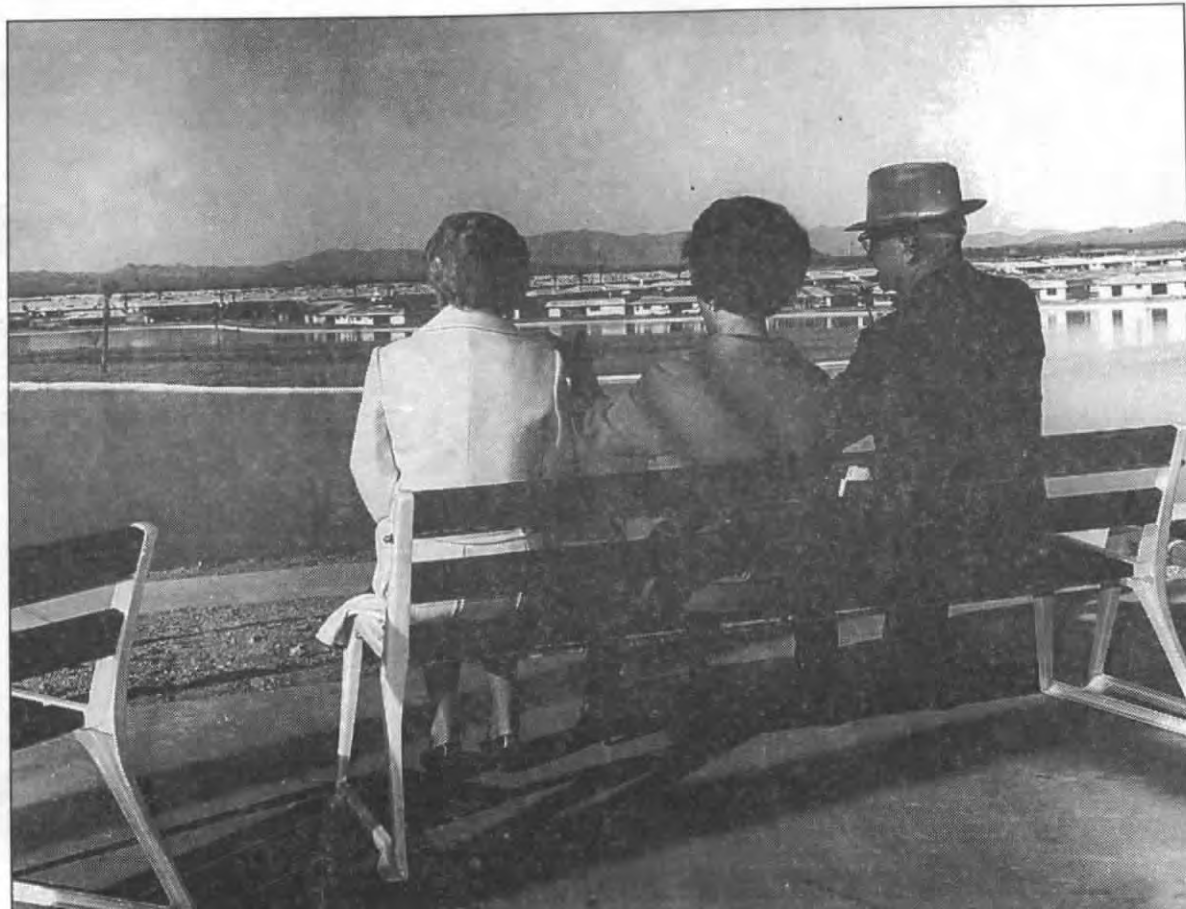
Then the Del E. Webb Development Co. (Devco) provided the room for the newly organized The Friends of the Sun City Library.

That organization was developed under the guidance of long-time librarian Ruth Mildner.

She said working in the small room "was like trying to serve the public out of a clothes closet."

The library was open three days a week with 2,500 books borrowed from the county library.

What Mildner said she



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO

Groundbreaking for the Sun City Post Office, above, takes place on Feb. 21, 1962. Viewpoint Lake, a Sun City centerpiece, lures prospective buyers in the '60s, left.

thought would be a few months of volunteer work turned into nine years.

"I've never worked so hard in my whole life for nothing," she said.

••••

Sun City's new volunteer fire company district was approved by a 1,375 to 80 vote on June 6, 1966.

Two weeks later the district was formally organized, with an election of officers, including Fire Chief George Meade. Others were John Prather as secretary-treasurer and Howard Reynolds, H. Kendall Mulcahy and Walter Isekeit as board members.

••••

Grand Center, 107th and Grand avenues, opened in 1960. The center housed the first travel service, First National Bank, golf car business, realty outlet (Del Webb Home Realty), restaurants (Melody Lane), grocery store, service station and budget variety store.

For many years it was the site of Sun City's only radio station, KWAQ-FM before the station was sold in 1983.

Sun City Travel is believed to be the first non-Del Webb business in Sun City.



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTOS

Divers ham it up at Mountain View, originally called Town Hall South, during the summer of 1967.



SUN CITY'S AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Gas prices in Sun City's early days were between 25 and 30 cents, above, and service stations employed uniformed service attendants. A flag-waver, left, celebrates the opening of Town Hall South, now called Mountain View Recreation Center, on June 29, 1967.



VF SC Street names  
 Kill all under Historical Bkn

# Del Webb: bigger than life

## Developer's gamble pays off

**T**he story of Del E. Webb has been told so often, he's legendary. So much so that people speak of him in the present tense.

The carpenter-turned entrepreneur's dream of active retirement not only came to fruition, but his ideas formed the basis for his company's successors to develop a Sun City culture from sea to shining sea.

Webb's been called a gambler and indeed his vision of a fair city in the middle of the Arizona desert drew both ridicule and skepticism.

As Glenn B. Sanberg, long-time Daily News-Sun columnist and co-author with Jane Freeman of "Jubilee," a history of Sun City, put it: "Webb's secret was a simple one: Activity, Economy and Individuality."

When several of the nation's top developers were called to Phoenix to view Webb's plans for the not-yet-named Sun City, they scoffed at the idea. In turn, "Webb's people bristled," Sanberg wrote. "We know the commitment is a gamble, but this is a leap of faith we are willing to make."

When the Del E. Webb Development Co. debuted five model homes on Jan. 1, 1960, a new era in retirement living began.

Webb's gamble had paid off.

Born in 1899 in Fresno, Calif., Delbert Eugene Webb learned carpentry as a hobby and baseball as a passion early in life.



SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Del Webb had hoped 10,000 people would show up for the opening of Sun City. He was off by 90,000.

Faced with family financial reverses, Webb quit school to become a carpenter's apprentice.

Still, baseball remained the love of his life, and he later would own the New York Yankees for a decade and serve as president of the American League.

In 1927, Webb contracted typhoid fever, and moved to Phoenix to recover in the dry climate.

By 1928 Webb had started his own carpentry business. By the end of the '30s, it was one of the largest in Arizona and, as such, was offered numerous defense contracts to help the country prepare for war.

Among them was the building of Luke Field.

After the war, the company continued government work, and captured many private

contracts too, some of them interesting in that they brought him into contact with show business personalities and reputed Vegas mobsters.

An official company history notes that "One of the most interesting was Howard Hughes. Webb and Hughes became fast friends. Often Hughes would join Webb and his golfing buddies, Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and the Goldwater brothers, Barry and Robert, for a game.

"Webb and Hughes also shared a love of flying. So, when Hughes got a defense contract to build planes, he turned to Del to help him build the factory."

Webb and a partner bought the Yankees in 1945. The team won the World Series 10 times during the 20 years Webb owned it.

On Jan. 1, 1960, the start of

the decade brought a new kind of eminence for Del Webb — Sun City, an innovative community that was designed exclusively for retired people, was opened.

After working for more than five months to convert a cotton field into a city, complete with a golf course, recreation center, shopping center and five model homes, Webb hoped that 10,000 visitors would attend the New Year's Day opening. Instead of 10,000, more than 100,000 people toured the property over the three-day weekend.

That newfangled "Sun City" eventually would crowd out the company's other work, until by the late 1970s, Webb was involved almost exclusively in retirement communities.

Hotel development provided additional opportunities for the company. What really brought



### Delbert Eugene Webb

Del Webb fame in hotel development, however, was the construction of the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas for underworld figure Bugsy Siegel.

In the years to come, Del Webb himself would become involved in gaming with the Sahara-Nevada Hotel.

By the time Sun City West was completed in 1998, the Del Webb Corp. had become a billion-dollar business, and was highly profitable

Webb himself died on July 4, 1974; his ashes scattered over the desert he had so long called home.

But the company lived on after him, led by many of the men Webb the man had hired and to whom he entrusted much of the company's work.

Today there are Sun City communities in Arizona, Nevada, California, Illinois, Texas and South Carolina, and some retirement projects purchased from others in Florida.

The company has said it's looking for other spots to build its retirement communities, and expected continued growth from the aging Baby Boomers, whom it sees as its primary market for growth.



# Faith pulls community together

FROM DAILY NEWS-SUN FILES

**T**he growth and development of the religious community in Sun City began with the birth of the community.

Call the roll of denominations and among those who will answer "here" are the Baptists, Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, Christians, United Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, Seventh-day Adventists, Assembly of God, Jews, Christ Scientists, Quakers, Latter-day Saints and others.

The growth of the religious community has been the result of numerous factors. It has been in keeping with trends starting with the beginnings of our nation, settlers moving in and bringing their church with them.

The Del E. Webb Development Co. anticipated this need and from the beginning designated certain strategic properties for church sites.

This enabled congregations

as they began to organize to have a place to build their churches.

Among those who pioneered Sun City were those who had been the leaders of their churches before coming to Arizona. They were experienced leaders and good church men and women.

They knew what to do and how to find each other. They brought skilled leadership in church management and administration.

They effectively put their skills to work and the churches began to take their places.

It has been observed that those involved in starting the churches were also the kind of people who were among the top 10 percent of the contributors to their home churches. They were liberal in their giving in Sun City.

This became evident, because as in no other community in the country, the congregations financed their new buildings effectively by selling bonds within the church family.

These bonds often were paid off well ahead of schedule. This enabled the congregations to build adequately from the very beginning. Some were able to build their complete church at one time.

The development of the beautiful, attractive and functional buildings has made Sun City a showplace of church structures.

It has been suggested that these church pioneers dreamed of the churches they wish they could have had in the past — and built them. The buildings provide well for the spiritual, physical and fellowship needs of the people.

A most important element of the development of the religious community has been the stature of pastoral leadership attracted to meet the challenges of new churches and a synagogue in a new community.

An unusual development of pastoral leadership comes from the fact that numerous ministers began moving in as they retired in other communities.

They became supportive in their respective congregations, adding fine creative leadership.

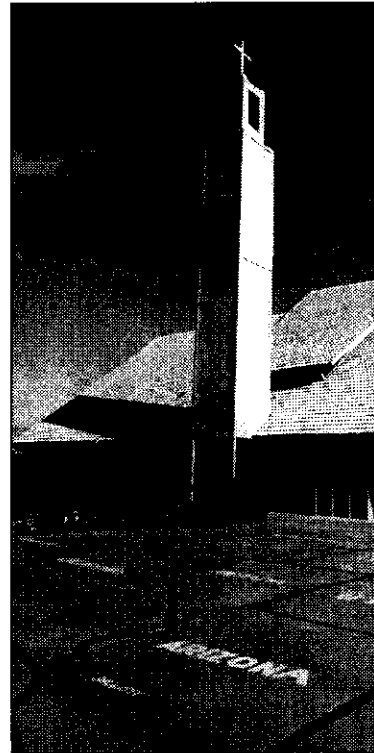
Still another aspect of ministerial leadership became unique to Sun City. Most pastors have served their churches until their retirement and then have stayed right in Sun City. Their support of the continuing ministry has been helpful.

The vitality of the Sun City religious community has been marked by continuing growth of concern for the welfare of Sun Citizens.

There has been a fine sense of working together in caring for their own and reaching out to help others through the ministerial association.

The most noticeable in this area has been the development of Interfaith Services to provide counseling and day care for the community.

Ministering to a community of aging people has become specialized to meet the needs of those people no longer able to



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO

The United Church of Sun City, 11250 N. 107th Ave., was the community's first church.

See Religious, Page 19

# Religious community nurtures ecumenism

From Page 14

care for themselves in their own houses.

The United Community Church sponsored Sun Valley Lodge. The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society established the Good Shepherd Retirement Center, Faith Presbyterian sponsored Royal Oaks, the Lutheran Brethren Church sponsored the Wooddale Village retirement apartments and the Baptist Church initiated Hines Village in Youngtown, the forerunner of Baptist Village.

The Salvation Army completed a service center with a chapel in late 1983 in Peoria just north of Sun City. Chaplain services are provided at Boswell Memorial Hospital.

Together with has been marked by events sponsored by the Ministerial Association — Easter Sunrise services at the Sun Bowl, Thanksgiving services at the Sundome, annual Holocaust Memorial Service.

Here is a list of congregations organized in Sun City

through 1995:

1960: United Community Church (United Church of Sun City), St. Christopher's Episcopal Church.

1961: St. Joachim and St. Anne Roman Catholic Church, Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran.

1962: First United Presbyterian (First Presbyterian).

1963: First United Methodist.

1964: First Church of Christ, Scientist.

1966: Fountain of Life Lutheran.

1967: Lakeview United Methodist, Church of the Palms (United Church of Christ), First Southern Baptist (First Baptist).

1969: Temple Beth Shalom.

1970: St. Clement of Rome Catholic, Unity Church of Sun City.

1971: Bellevue Heights American Baptist, First Christian Church.

1972: Faith United Presbyterian (Faith Presbyterian), All Saints of the Desert Episcopal,



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO

All Saints of the Desert Episcopal Church on Hutton Drive is among many examples of the beautiful architecture of Sun City's houses of worship.

Evangel Church Assembly of God, Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran.

1974: American Lutheran.  
1975: Unitarian-Universalist (now meets in Surprise), Grace Bible.

1976: Congregational Church of Sun City, Willowbrook United Methodist, Valley Church of Religious Science

(now meets in Peoria).

1977: St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic.

1979: Sun City Christian (Disciples of Christ).

1981: Seventh-day Adventist.

1984: Quaker Worship, St. Alban's American Episcopal (St. Alban's Anglican Church now meets in Peoria), Salvation

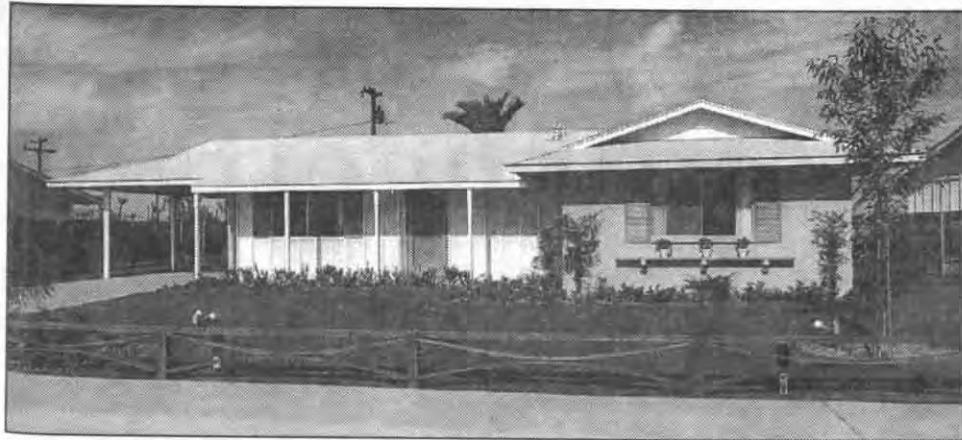
Army.

1991: West Valley Christian Fellowship (Reformed Church).

1995: Latter-day Saints.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: The Rev. Leslie J. Ross, pastor of First United Methodist Church in Sun City for eight years, was the principal author of this story.*





The Sierra, a two-bedroom, two-bath home, was touted for its excellent traffic pattern and well-planned kitchen with built-in range and oven. The sliding glass door in this model leads to a covered lanai.



The Norfolk was the ultimate retirement home with three bedrooms, two baths and a leisure room with built-in mahogany bookcase shelving, TV space, china cabinet and desk top of Formica.

## Congratulations Sun City!!!



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Smokers Domain • 583-9170

**Title**  
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Sun City Travel • 974-3607

## History Highlights

---

**C**onstruction on La Ronde Centre began in 1970. The first tenants began operating in 1972.

La Ronde's unique, completely circular layout was appropriate for the times, when Sun City neighborhoods were going around in circles.

The Centre was known for the first movie theater, Alco, the first printing shop and the home of several financial institutions, including First Federal, First Interstate Bank, Arizona Bank and Continental Bank.



Greenway Terrace was under construction at the same time as La Ronde Centre, with the first retailer, Al Mart Gift Shop, opening its doors Nov. 1, 1972. The two anchor stores, Lucky's Food Stores and Walgreens Drugs, opened their doors in 1973.



Thunderbird Plaza began construction Jan. 1, 1973, and finished the same year. The smallest of the Sun City centers was also one of the most popular, with a strategic location at Thunderbird Boulevard and 99th Avenue.

Thunderbird Plaza was typical of Sun City shopping centers with a large grocery store, A.J. Bayless; drug store, Value Drug Center; jewelry store, Liska Jewelers; a beauty salon, Valley Beauty Salon; and a distinctive restaurant, Sing High.



Bell Camino Center was Sun City's first shopping center north of Bell Road to serve what Sun Citians call Phase III and it was the last one built by Devco in Sun City.

It's also the second-largest center in square footage, with 97,790 square feet. Its two largest tenants, Safeway and Long's Drugs, opened in late 1977.

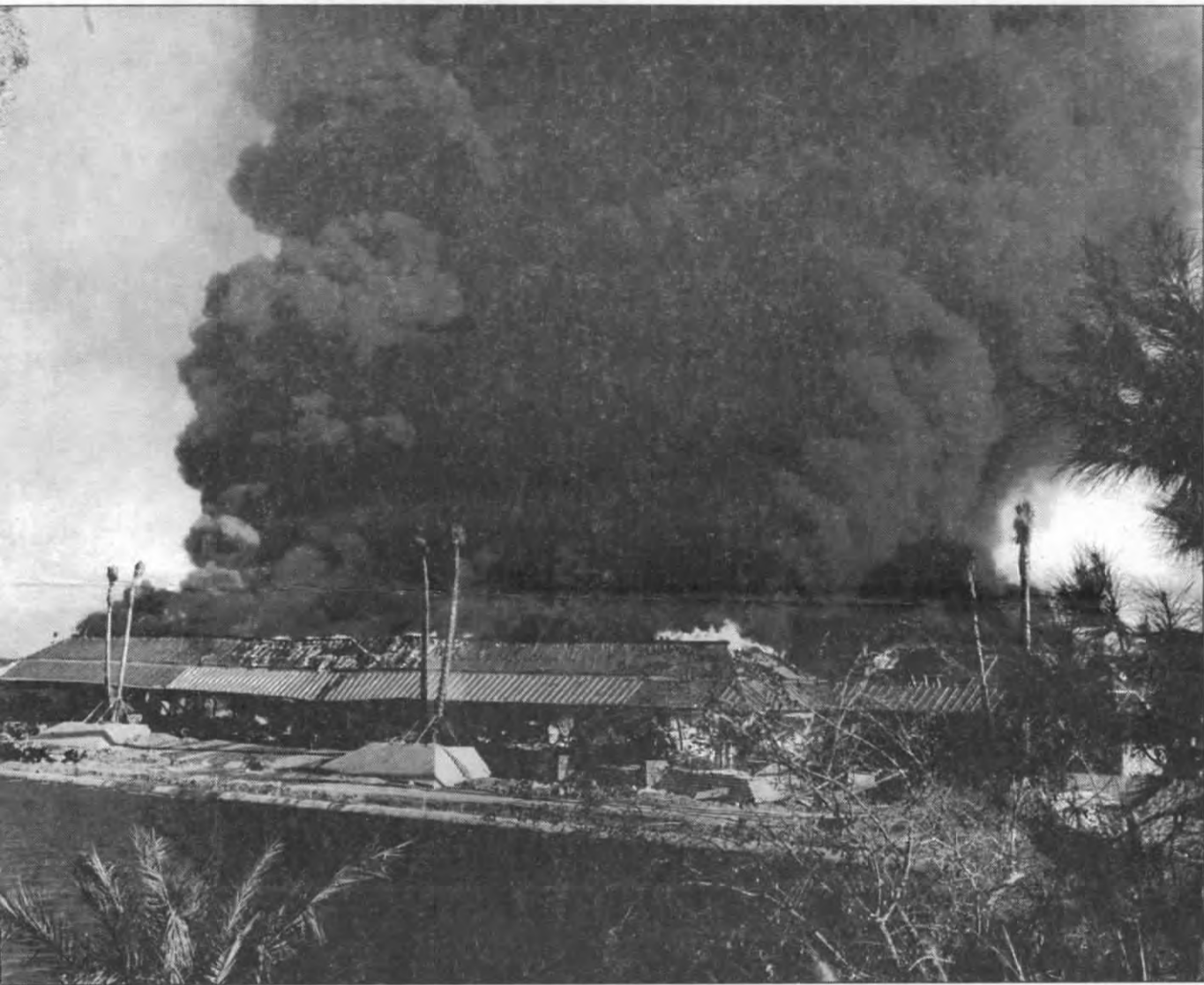
Bell Camino had its own selection of unique stores, including the Lovin' Touch Deli and General Nutrition Center.

# The '70s:

## A decade of rapid commercial growth and a dramatic fire



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO



Del E. Webb, above, addresses the crowd that turned out for the grand opening of Sundial Recreation Center in February 1973. The Sun City developer and New York Yankees owner died July 4, 1974. In February 1972, a month before its scheduled opening, the Lakes Club was ablaze. The fire was caused by a plumber's torch that ignited a strip of tar paper.

DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO



JIM PAINTER/DAILY NEWS-SUN

In January 1970, Lakeview Recreation Center opened, left, becoming the third multi-use facility available to Sun City residents. Firefighters rescue a Sun City couple's car from the drainage ditch on 99th Avenue just north of Santa Fe Drive above, in the fall 1978, the year of the first in a series of "100-year" floods.

# Webb picked a winner

FROM DAILY NEWS-SUN FILES

**N**aming the budding retirement city developed by Del Webb, according to "Jubilee," Sun City's 25th anniversary book, was not all untarnished silver.

The News-Sun published the winner of a naming contest Dec. 8, saying that it was E.A. Britton of Eugene, Ore.

However, write Jubilee compilers, this was just a bare outline of the story.

A contest had been announced in newspapers all over the country, notes the book. The Reuben Donnelly Co. of Chicago, a reputable overseer firm, was retained to conduct the contest.

On Dec. 8, Webb executives had joined the Donnelly representatives as they were reviewing the final names. A dozen or more were discussed.

Del Webb walked in, examined some of the names and casually remarked, "I like Sun City."

The Donnelly people objected, since this was not the way they had been hired to run a fair contest and if they were to certify the winners, the choice would have to be under the rules.

"You don't seem to understand," said one the Webb top-level men. "If Del Webb says that is the name, that's what it will be."

So Sun City became the community's official name.

There were to be three winners, so



SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mr. and Mrs. E.A. Britton, winners of the Sun City name contest, relax by the pool at the Civic Association (Oakmont).

Webb officials had to get an agreement for a drawing for first, second and third places from among five finalists.

The E.A. Brittons became top winners, but they couldn't be found. They were said to be in a trailer camp in Palm Springs, Calif.

The prize, a house in Sun City, was released to the Brittons through a Palm Springs attorney. The Brittons sold the house because they decided not to live here, Jubilee reports.

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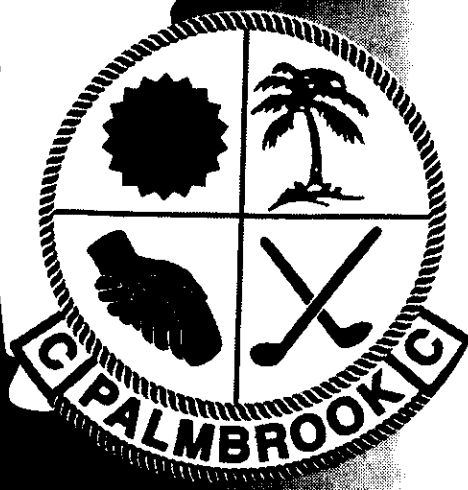
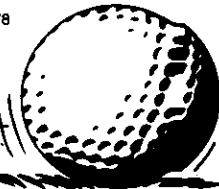
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Daily News-Sun • Saturday, March 2 and Sunday, March 3, 2002

# Those were the days

## Local PBS affiliate looks at the creation of Sun City in "Arizona Memories from the '60s"

**JOHN GUZZON**  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

With the passage of time comes memories, mainly of the defining moments of one's existence.

Since the end of World War II and the boys coming home, most of the defining moments in Arizona history have been tied with growth and the development of the desert.

So, when local PBS affiliate KAET set off to make "Arizona Memories from the '60s," — a sequel to their popular look at the state in the 1950s — growth was an immediate centerpiece.

And, since Sun City was a standard bearer for

### IF YOU WATCH

- **WHAT:** "Arizona Memories from the '60s," a production of KAET channel 8
- **WHEN:** 7 p.m. Monday, 1 p.m. Wednesday, 4:30 p.m. March 9 and 1 p.m. March 14
- **WHERE:** Your favorite television set



The Shop-Lifter was the first attempt at a transit system for the retirees who moved to Sun City in the early 1960s.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

thousands of retirement and family developments for the next 40 years, it was obviously an easy choice for a major spot in the program.

"Sun City made the cut right off the bat and

the more we researched, the more interesting it became," said Don Hopfer, producer of "Arizona Memories."

Del Webb, shown here at the opening of the Sundial Recreation Center in 1973, was the visionary behind Sun City and the development plan which spawned numerous look-alikes.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

While the creation and subsequent popularity of Sun City was a landmark event, the program also focuses upon the arrival of the Phoenix Suns, the construction of Grady Gammage Auditorium, the moving of London Bridge to Lake Havasu City and such cultural phenomenons as "The Wallace and Ladmo Show," and Sen. Barry Goldwater.

"The exciting thing about making this show is that we did something new," Hopfer said. "We asked viewers to send us their memories: Home movies, photographs and any kind of memorabilia. More than 150 people contacted us and more than 12 of them are in the show. This production could not have happened without their involvement."

The Sun City Historical Society was one such group and it allowed KAET to use three promotional films produced by the Del Webb Corp. in the 1960s — "In the Beginning," and "The Sun City Story."

"Arizona Memories from the '60s" accurately captured the spirit of those first few years or progress, said Jane Freeman, founder of the Sun City Historical Society.

"We decided if we were going to get into retirement developments we needed to put the amenities in first," Owen Childress, a former Sun City salesman says in the program.

Freeman said seeing tangible evidence of the amenities promised at earlier communities but never delivered set Sun City apart from other like

**See Sun City, D2**

Mr. and Mrs. E.A. Britton, winners of the Sun City name contest, relax by the pool at the Civic Association, now known as Oakmont Recreation Center.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

## Sun City brings state to national prominence

From D1

communities.

"When they came for the grand opening, you could start the buzz saw. The golf course was there and ready," she said.

Regardless of the amenities readily available, it seems that many of the residents of nearby Glendale and Peoria — the only substantial towns at the time — were skeptical of Sun City's future.

"We thought it was funny. No one thought it was going to fly," said Carole DeCosmo of the Sahuaro Ranch Foundation in Glendale.

But Sun City has thrived,

becoming the model for developments across the country. Unfortunately, however, many of the Sun City pioneers are no longer around to see the significance of the first master planned retirement community.

But the impact of their decisions continue to reverberate throughout the country.

"Sun City is not only an example of a monumental Arizona development but it brought Arizona to national prominence," Hopfer said.

"Arizona Memories from the '60s," can be seen at 7 p.m. Monday, 1 p.m. Wednesday, 4:30 p.m. March 9 and 1 p.m. March 14 on channel 8.



2

Return to Fern Evans



# Volunteers rule in Sun City

GINGER SCOTT-EIDEN  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

**V**olunteers are the life blood of this community.

Because of them, the streets are kept clean, a friendly and understanding face is always smiling at the hospital and a watchful eye is kept over the residents to keep them safe.

During its 40 years, Sun City has grown from a small retirement community in the desert west of Phoenix to a self-functioning society with an army of volunteers ready to tackle any task.

"I've seen things change quite a bit," said Janet Henningsen, executive director of the Sun Cities Volunteer Placement Service, which processes about 100 volunteer requests a month.

When Henningsen started with the service in 1992 there wasn't a single computer in her office. Now, she said workers are using computers to connect

Sun Citians to all types of volunteer opportunities.

"We're even starting to develop virtual volunteering opportunities," Henningsen said. "And we have a lot of technical volunteers who want to do technical training and work with computers."

Volunteers have been the driving force behind many programs in the Sun Cities for years.

Rich Kenney, community relations director for Interfaith Services, said Interfaith volunteers play an important role in the way the organization functions.

"Volunteers are what makes us tick," he said. "We have everything from handymen and handywomen to grocery shoppers."

And Interfaith volunteers perform diverse duties.

One of Kenney's favorite stories to tell is of an 80-year-old Sun City woman who called Interfaith because she needed help assembling her chain saw.

"We sent a handyman right

out," he said. "She was doing some yard work or something."

But the volunteers do more for the community than simply delivering groceries or helping repair things. They often lend an ear and become good friends and listeners to people living alone, he said.

"People appreciate that our volunteers will sit down and talk with them," Kenney said.

For many, the City of Volunteers has offered an opportunity to do something they never would have imagined doing before retirement.

"We have very few people who were former police officers or police chiefs in the posse," said Dave Kaemmerer, public information officer for the Maricopa County Sheriff's Posse of Sun City and a volunteer.

Posse members handle a variety of requests, from repairing toilets and changing light bulbs to patrolling the streets and directing traffic.

And many have donned the posse uniform for several years.

Kaemmerer said there are at

least two or three posse members who are entering their 25th year of service.

Last year, volunteers turned in a total of 90,000 hours of patrol duty and put 219,000 miles on their vehicles.

"The thing I think is most rewarding (about serving in the posse) is when people you have helped say 'I don't know what I would have done without you,'" Kaemmerer said.

Justine McCormick of Sun City had always wanted to work in the health industry, but there wasn't enough time or money for nursing school between taking care of five children and working with draftsmen and as a school teacher.

However, during her retirement, she's been able to fulfill that dream through her volunteer work at Boswell Memorial Hospital. She's volunteered at Boswell for four years helping out staff members and the community in a variety of ways.

McCormick gives tours, conducts training and helps out on the nursing floors where need-

ed. "I've also been able to use my teaching skills at the hospital," McCormick said. "I've taught a number of classes."

There are approximately 150 categories of jobs that volunteers can help with at the hospital. There are about 3,000 volunteers registered with the Boswell Campus, 1,500 of which are active meaning they serve once a week.

But while she and other volunteers in the Sun Cities don't receive a paycheck, they're reaping benefits in other ways, McCormick said.

"We're meeting a need of the community," she said. "The hospital has a need and we, as volunteers are filling that need."

"But we get something out of it, too. There's a rapport here that you might not have otherwise. You're appreciated, recognized and respected."

To find a volunteer opportunity that suits you, call the Volunteer Placement Service at 546-1774 or search the Web at [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org).

# On the scene

## PRIDES keep streets spick-and-span

FROM DAILY NEWS-SUN FILES

A corporate pullout and a record citrus crop in 1980 spurred Sun Citlan Joe McIntyre to write a letter to the editor of the Daily News-Sun to ask residents for help cleaning up the mess of oranges cluttering local streets.

"Three people showed up," McIntyre said. "We filled our cars with oranges and then we didn't know what to do with them. We put them in Dumpsters at some of the businesses."

That was the origin of the Sun City PRIDES. Proud Residents Independently Donating Essential Services.

"It just grew from there," McIntyre said. "The press has been very good to

us" and word of mouth also was a factor.

Del E. Webb Development Co. (Devco), amid a cash-flow crisis, ended its 20-year paternal relationship with

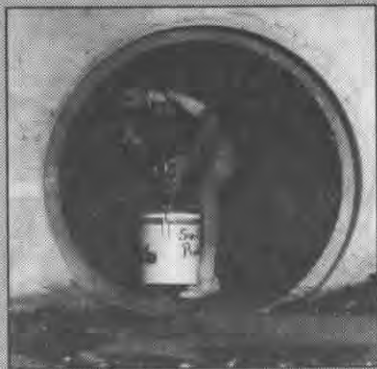
Sun City, leaving residents and the county to handle the community's affairs.

Maricopa County was undergoing a cash crisis of its own and assigned only six workers to the 14-square mile area of Sun City.

"The county couldn't continue the amount of care Devco had and we would have to help," McIntyre said.

The success of the PRIDES spurred a spin-off in neighboring Sun City West, Particular Residents

Involved Doing Environmental Services, started in 1981.



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO

In four decades, Sun City has earned the reputation of a "spotless community" thanks to the PRIDES.

## Posse traces roots to Civil Defense

FROM DAILY NEWS-SUN FILES

In the early 1970s, a Civil Defense Unit headed by retired Col. Paul Morrill was started in Sun City.

Members met and trained in area homes assisted by Sheriff Paul Blubaum's civil aide, Andy Wagner.

Today that group is better known as the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City.

But back then it was a small group of people interested in serving the community in an emergency or disaster situation.

Members would patrol neighborhoods in their personal vehicles identified by magnetic signs on the sides and use public or private telephones to call in reports of crimes to the Sheriff's Office.

Later, as the community continued to grow, it became apparent to members they should have some official guidance and support, so they became the posse under the county sheriff.

Sheriff Blubaum designated posse

members as peace officers and Marvin VanDera was elected as the posse's first commander in 1973.

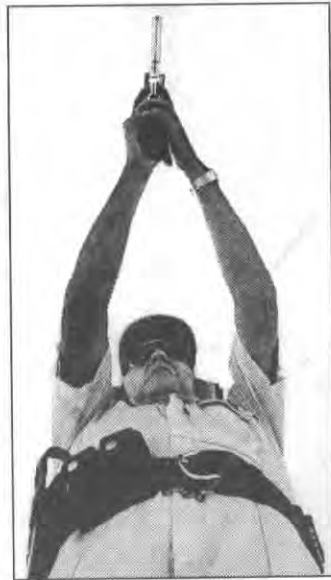
Van Dera served four terms as commander and under his guidance the posse was given "permanent call to duty" from Sheriff Jerry Hill.

Posse volunteers were given white helmets called "bubble hats" with the sheriff's emblem on them, and whistles for identification. Later, they received yellow jump suits.

In 1981, the posse's first permanent headquarters was built at 111th and Peoria avenues. The posse eventually outgrew that facility and is now behind Sunland Memorial Park at 10861 Sunland Drive near Del Webb Boulevard and Bell Road.

Maurine "Babe" Barkdoll earned distinction in 1983 as the posse's first woman commander and

national acclaim befell the posse when President Ronald Reagan visited May 6 of that year.



JIM PAINTER/DAILY NEWS-SUN

A posse member takes aim at a target on a shooting range in the early '80s.



# Stadium was diamond in Sun City rough

## Brewers were kings of spring

**RICH BOLAS**  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

**S**al Bando wouldn't recognize Sun City Stadium today.

The former major-leaguer and one-time member of three World Series winners with the Oakland Athletics still remembers the ballpark that used to be at the northwest corner of 111th and Grand avenues.

"I remember the concrete walls in the outfield and the fans who used to drive their golf carts into the stadium for games," said Bando, now a front-office executive for the Milwaukee Brewers.

"There was always a certain quiet about playing in Sun City. You always felt like you were away from the hustle and bustle of the city."

Built in 1971, Sun City Stadium served as the Cactus League home for the Brewers from 1973 through 1985.

The Brewers left for Chandler following the 1985 campaign, sending Sun City Stadium into a spiral of inactivity.

Unable to lure another Cactus League tenant, the 5,000-seat facility was demolished in the mid-1990s and is now the site of Fountains at the Sun City apartment complex, which opened in March 1996.

Bando played for the Brewers from 1977 through 1981, which gave the third baseman plenty of time to familiarize himself with the idiosyncratic qualities of Sun City Stadium.

Imagine a place where fans

could literally drive their golf cars into the ballpark and never leave their vehicles as they watched the game from the stadium concourse.

While enjoying the game, fans also frequently had a chance to watch and listen as trains whistled by on the Santa Fe tracks that paralleled the third base line.

The Brewers changed addresses and began to change their fortunes after the team moved its training headquarters from Tempe to Sun City in 1973.

Milwaukee followed a 65-win season in 1972 with 74 victories under manager Del Crandall in 1973.

That first spring in Sun City featured players such as first

**See Saints ruled, 36**



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO

The Sun City Saints were the fast-pitch softball tenants of Sun City Stadium from 1971 to 1984.

# Golf headlines Sun City's sporting life

STAFF REPORT

**S**un City and recreational sports go together like wine with cheese and 100-degree days and July in the desert.

Golf, lawn bowling, senior softball, tennis, bowling, swimming, shuffleboard, mini-golf and bocce are all a part of the Sun City lifestyle.

## GOLF

Sun City has eight championship golf courses as well as three executive courses.

North has the distinction as Sun City's first course, opening for play in 1960. Four other championship courses complete the lineup of layouts that are part of the Recreation Centers of Sun City Inc.: Lakes East, Riverview, South and Willowcreek.

The recreation centers also feature three executive courses: Lakes East, Quail Run and Willowbrook.

Three championship courses are at private country clubs: Sun City Country Club, Palmbrook Country Club and Union Hills Country Club.

Sun City golfers are involved in



LISA GOETTSCHE/DAILY NEWS-SUN

A Sun City golfer taps in one of the billions of putts made each year on the community's 11 golf courses.

tournament golf almost every week, but here some of the more prestigious events:

- The Sun City men's golf championship is a 54-hole event featuring the top golfers from recreation centers courses. Sponsored by the Sun City Men's Golf Association, it is played every March on three of the recreation

centers championship courses.

- The Sun City Women's Champion of Champions Tournament is played every April and features the top four golfers from each of the recreation centers' courses. Sponsored by the Sun City Women's Golf Association, the 54-hole tournament is always a premiere women's golf event.

- The Octogenarian Tournament celebrated its 20th anniversary in March and features the best golfers who are at least 80 years old.

- The Daily News-Sundial Classic will likely become an annual tradition. The inaugural tournament is slated to run from March through May and feature the best players from country clubs and public courses in Sun City. Patterned after the Ryder Cup, the event will determine the best team and individual players in Sun City.

## SENIOR SOFTBALL

National and American league teams play twice a week during the fall and spring at Sun Bowl Field.

Top players from the various teams also make up a traveling squad known as the Del Webb Sidewinders, who play in tournaments across the country.

## LAWN BOWLING

Lawn bowling greens at Marinette, Fairway, Sundial, Bell and Lakeview give

lawn bowlers plenty of practice.

## TENNIS

Courts are located at Bell and Marinette recreation centers.

## BOWLING

Lanes are located at Lakeview and Bell recreation centers. The Sun City Bowling Hall of Fame honors the area's best bowlers with an annual induction ceremony in February. Bowlers are inducted based on performance on the lanes as well as contributions to the sport in Sun City.

## SWIMMING

Senior swimmers are regular winners at the Arizona Senior Olympics as well as master swimming events throughout the state.

## SHUFFLEBOARD

Courts are located at Bell and Sundial recreation centers. The indoor courts at Sundial give players year-round access.

## MINI-GOLF

The Sun City Mini-Golf Club has numerous events and also co-sponsors the annual Friendship Tournament with its counterparts in Sun City West.

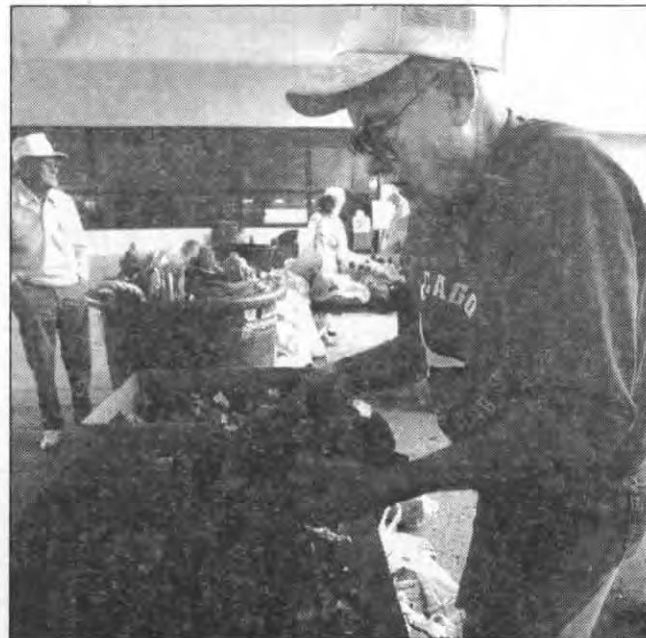
## BOCCE

The bocce courts at Sundial Recreation Center are the site of Arizona Senior Olympic action every February.



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Fun spills over at the Fairway Fun Fair. Each recreation center hosts a festival annually.



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Cliff Ludkowski works at the Sun City Agricultural Club table during the Sundial Fun Fair in 1999.



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Janet Moran paints a rabbit on a birdhouse during a class taught by Shirley Ball at Bell Ceramics Club.

# Lure of it all

## Recreation draws folks from near, far

STAFF REPORT

The idea was a new one in 1960: a retirement community in what is now called the Sunbelt, with amenities — places where residents could go for fun and recreation, for cards and crafts, for tennis and golf, swimming, bowling and softball.

But it was one of the things that made Sun City what it is today: a national model that proved just how good an idea amenities could be for the developer, for the residents and for the resale value of homes.

Almost before the first residents starting arriving in Sun City in 1960, there was a community center, a place for them to gather. Just off Grand Avenue at 107th Avenue, it's still there, now called Oakmont Recreation Center.

There also were two golf courses within a year.

With newcomers flocking to the new Sun City, a second recreation center was soon needed; it was announced in 1960 and opened in January 1961 as Town Hall Center, now Fairway.

But it didn't take residents long to figure out that they ought to manage the centers themselves, for although the Del Webb Development Co. had a lot of talented folks, its employees weren't residents by and large.

And so was born the Sun

City Civic Association, and trouble, as some residents wanted an annual assessment on property owners to fund recreation operations, and others objected.

The result was competing groups for a time, with the new Town Hall Center and homes around it subject to mandatory contributions which Devco wrote into deeds, while residents around the original Community Center had no such requirement.

It took a lot of arguing — and years — for that dilemma to be resolved, but in the end, an outfit that eventually became the Recreation Centers of Sun City Inc. was crafted, and deeds in the original area were changed, to require mandatory membership.

The price, of course, has changed in four decades, but what price hasn't? The original cost was \$20 a year; now it's \$130.

That, plus golf and bowling fees and club contributions, gives the centers some \$14 million a year to operate, using about 400 full-time and part-time employees.

As Sun City succeeded beyond even Del Webb's expectations, the number of recreational amenities quickly rose.

They increased in size and complexity and included golf courses.

Oakmont, the original cen-



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Lois Mueller and Edward McKenzie demonstrate weaving at the Artistic Weavers Club at the 1999 Oakmont Fun Fair.

ter, opened early in 1960; Town Hall (now Fairway) came in January 1961.

Mountain View opened in June 1967; with Lakeview, north of Grand Avenue, coming into use in 1970.

Even as Sundial, then the largest, was being dedicated in 1973, the Webb company was at work on Bell Recreation Center, which opened in 1976, two years after Delbert Eugene Webb, who created the idea, died. A Del Webb Memorial Garden in the Bell Center memorializes him.

Later, as the Webb company built what is now Phase III north of Bell Road, there appeared to be need for another recreation center.

It was built on former Peoria School District land on the northeast corner of 99th Avenue and Union Hills Drive.

Now called Marinette, after the original settlement at 103rd and Grand avenues, the center, and the need for it, was controversial, as Webb first planned

the center, then let it slip off the plans.

Parts of it were built in 1979 and 1980, with other parts finished in 1984. It still seems remote from the rest of the community in many ways.

Golf also came into its own, with homes along the golf courses snapped up.

The community of 38,000 people now hosts 11 golf courses, three of them private country clubs.

Residents are served by the early North and South courses in Phase I and the later Quail Run course; by Lakes East and Lakes West and Riverview in Phase II, and by Willowbrook and Willowcreek north of Bell Road in Phase III.

The original Sun City Country Club is in Phase I; Palmbrook Country Club on Greenway Road is in Phase II and the Union Hills Country Club anchors Phase III.

In addition, it didn't take residents long to recognize the desirability of a dining club, a

private club without golf, for those who wanted an evening out but who didn't need the links.

The Lakes Club and its magnificent view of Viewpoint Lake from the main dining room, was the result, though the building you see today is the second on that spot.

The original structure was destroyed by fire in 1972 almost on the day it was to open, and rebuilt in the same design on the same spot.

While they're not recreational activities per se, the service clubs that dot Sun City were and remain an important part of resident lives.

Altrusa, Civitan, Kiwanis, Lions and Lioness, Optimist and Soroptimist, and Rotary were soon established, in more than one club.

And the military groups, American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars were soon operating too, as were Masons, Moose, Elks and similar benevolent and social groups.

# Interests spawn clubs

MONICA ALONZO-DUNSMOOR  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

If you like to quilt, paint china, make baskets, walk, run or jog or discuss politics or religion, there's a place for you and a club to join in Sun City.

Those are just a few of the activities that abound in the community celebrating its 40th anniversary. There is virtually something for everyone. From arts and crafts to sports and fitness to service and fraternal — there are 143 chartered clubs in the Recreation Centers of Sun City alone; dozens more in the community at large.

Patricia Bruyn is the clubs and activities manager for Sun City's recreation centers.

Although she said there haven't been too many changes in the club scene during her five years of service, she said she gets calls about the computer club nearly every day.

She said that the interest in exercise clubs is also picking up.

"Most people already pretty much know what they're interested in," Bruyn said. "But newcomers to the city will generally call and ask for information on different clubs."

Helen Boothe is the president of the Sun City Doll Study Club, a club that has been around since 1981.

"We meet every Tuesday and we

sew," she said. "They're not formal meetings, we sit and we sew costumes for antique dolls. We also attend other events. It's quite a popular hobby. It's a place to get together and play."

The Doll Study Club has 13 active members and two associate members.

Boothe joined the club nearly 15 years ago.

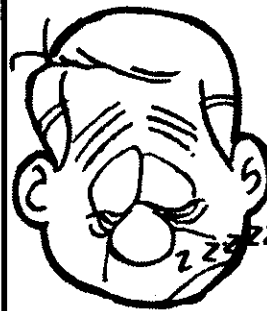
"My particular reason (for enjoying antique dolls) is that when I was a little girl and after the Depression, there was no money and I didn't have any dolls," she said. "So when I grew up, I bought myself one, and one thing led to another."

And when the need arises, a new club is usually formed to meet the need.

Richard Bondon, president of the Auto Repair Savings Club, recently founded the club that meets four times a year.

"We had our first meeting this month," he said. "Auto bills are very high, particularly for seniors. What we're trying to do is find reputable repair shops with knowledgeable mechanics that do quality work and charge fair prices."

For information on rec centers clubs, call 876-3000. For other clubs, read the Daily News-Sun calendar each Monday.



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# Social Services web embraces Sun City

JOSH KRIST  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The web of social services in Sun City started, in many ways, in 1962.

The Rev. Dr. Walter Witt began the Sun Cities Area Ministerial Association then, which eventually spawned the Sun Cities Area Interfaith Services in the early 1980s.

Interfaith Services is a non-profit, all-volunteer, non-sectarian human service organization which assists aging individuals with maintaining their dignity and independence through programs such as adult day services, care management, counseling, grocery shopping, home care assistance and a handyman service.

"Our mission is to help people remain independent in their own homes as long as possible," said Rich Kenney, organization spokesman.

"We're opening up a new center, hopefully in May, in Sun City. And that's a dementia-specific center," he said.

The handyman service, he noted, has taken a contemporary twist.

"We're proud to say we have two women who are handymen, we call them handymams," he said.

Through March, Kenney said, new counseling groups are starting, although residents can join a group at any time.



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO

The Rev. Walter Witt, shown doing some kitchen work in January 1966, began the Sun Cities Area Ministerial Association, which established the Sun Cities Area Interfaith Services.

The new groups are: Living through loss, for those who have just lost a loved one; Stress management; and a couples communication group.

"A very important program is our

See Services, Page 46

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979-3740



# Services

From Page 45

peer counseling. This is a free service, and we train volunteers to go into people's homes to counsel them," Kenney said.

Interfaith relies on about 400 volunteers, he said.

Their efforts will be recognized at an April 8 breakfast, details forthcoming.

To reach Interfaith Services, call 584-4999.

Some additional Services in the community:

● **American Red Cross** provides free transportation for the elderly and disabled. For information, call 972-3407.

● **The Recorded Recreational Reading for the Blind** is a local, all-volunteer group that produces tape-recorded community news and recreational material for Sun City area residents unable to read print. For information, call 933-0985.

● **Meals on Wheels** provides hot and cold meals seven days a week. For information, call 974-9430.

● **Northwest Valley Regional Community Council** oversees a number of programs including a Wake-Up-Tuck-In telephone service, and studies, plans and recommends action on social, health and related issues. For information, call 583-4100.

● **Olive Branch Senior Center** operates in the Sun Bowl Shopping Plaza and offers programs for seniors. For information, call 974-6797.

● **Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic** is a non-profit organization providing free recorded textbooks for blind or print handicapped students from elementary through post graduate college levels. For information call 977-6020.

● **Sun Cities Information and Referral Service Inc.** is a non-profit corporation financed by the Sun City Community Fund/United Way. Free and confidential telephone service is provided. For information, call 974-4713.

● **Sun Cities Lions Foundation Inc.** is a part of Lions Clubs International, the largest service organization in the world. For information, call 933-2604.

● **Sun City Community Fund Inc./United Way** is an all-volunteer organization that provides financial and human service aid to needy Sun City residents. For information, call 876-0178.

● **Sunshine Service** lends medical equipment, roll-away beds, cribs, high-chairs and car seats. For information, call 974-2561.

● **Sun Cities Area Transit System** provides demand response Dial-A-Ride for \$2.50 each way. For information, call 977-8363.

● **Veterans Administration Northwest Clinic** is located at 10147 W. Grand Ave., just east of 103rd Avenue in Sun City. For information, call 602-222-2630.

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Catch the pride!



City of Volunteers

Millennium Celebration

# City earns world-class reputation

## Ambassadors, Chamber, Realtors promote community

JOHN GUZZON  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Upon the 40th anniversary of the original Sun City, it is appropriate to say that what was begun here in 1960 has given birth to a new standard of life for those approaching their senior years.

According to Lila Stephens, manager of the Sun City Visitors Center, 9903 W. Bell Road, the standards-setting nature of Sun City promotes the area like nothing else could.

"We are known worldwide. We have had people from Germany, Canada and England. Just last week, we had a family from Denmark," Stephens said. "That comes from when Del Webb first built Sun City. The

acclaim went worldwide. He has built many Sun Cities, but this is the first, so that is why many people come here."

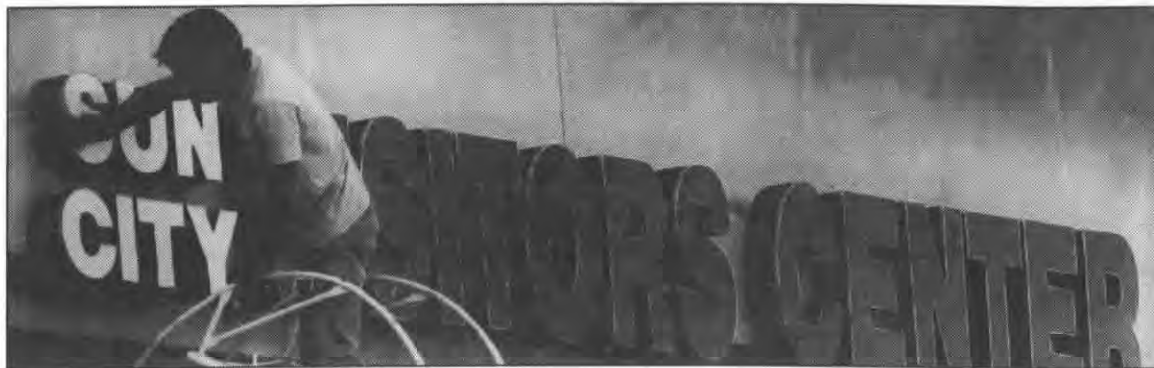
Consequently, she said, many interested in Sun City are friends of current residents.

"Many of the people that wind up moving here know someone already here," she said. "They come, like it, and then try to find a place to rent or buy."

For those who may not be quite ready to decide to take the plunge and relocate out West, a video story of Sun City is available for viewing at the Visitors Center.

The center, opened Nov. 3, 1989, is operated by the all-volunteer Ambassadors, whose primary mission is to promote Sun City. It was organized by business people, clergy and residents who were concerned there was nobody to promote the community after the departure of the Del Webb Corp.

Residents and members of the business community sit on its board and conduct an annual fund drive to underwrite the marketing campaign.



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO

The sign goes up at the Promenade Center for the opening of the Visitors Center in 1989.

Contributors of \$25 or more receive a free video when they visit the center in the Promenade Center.

For information, call 977-5000.

According to Donna Lewis, CEO of the Sun Cities Area Association of Realtors, the video is currently the best promotion of Sun City.

"The video is really getting a lot of exposure because it is good, positive and upbeat. It is easy to send out and tells the story very quickly," Lewis said.

The Realtors Association also promotes Sun City in other

ways, Lewis said, such as through the Internet, open houses and advertisements in newspapers and television.

Sun City comes under the umbrella of the Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce, which also serves Sun City West, El Mirage, Surprise and Youngtown.

The chamber's mission is to advance the civic, economic, cultural and social betterment and interests of the residents and businesses of the Northwest Valley.

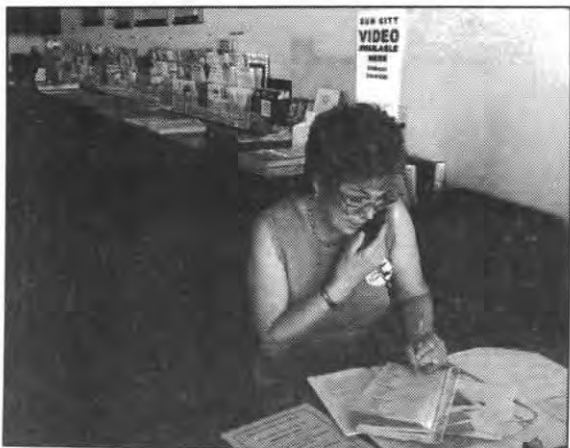
It encourages new business location, as well as provides

information to potential residents.

Ryan Peterson, president-elect of the Northwest Valley Chamber, said the chamber supports and promotes a variety of events including the Better Living Expo, held annually at the Sundome, to showcase area businesses.

"We are extremely event-oriented, which serves as a service to the community," he said.

The chamber has a Website: [www.northwestvalley.com](http://www.northwestvalley.com) or interested people may call 583-0692.



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Volunteer Lee Schumacher answers the telephone at the Sun City Visitors Center, where Ed and Mary Jane Banfield of Sun City West, below, look over information. The Ambassadors, the group that oversees the operation of the center, has produced a video of Sun City. Contributors of more than \$25 may go to the center in the Promenade Center to receive one free.



# 2 groups look out for residents' interests

**JOSH KRIST**  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

**T**wo home-grown organizations for Sun City, the Home Owners Association and the Sun City Taxpayers Association, have each, in its own way, looked out for Sun Citians in a special way.

People have been turning to HOA for 38 years now to help them get acquainted with community services, enforce deed restrictions, protect age-restricted zoning and voice concerns with the governing bodies of neighboring jurisdictions.

HOA is the progeny of the long-defunct Sun City Civic Association, and is the closest thing to a city council Sun City has. Twelve elected directors work to solve the problems and improve the quality of life for the 20,000 voluntary members.

When HOA incorporated in April 1963, it had 2,500 members and was housed in a small office in Grand Center. Today, the directors and staff work out of an association-owned building at 10401 Coggins Drive.

Annual start-up dues in 1963 were \$2 per person. Now, members pay \$5 per person.

Among other current activities, HOA annually publishes the Official Homeowners Directory, listing residents of Sun City, Sun City West, Youngtown and retirement communities in adjacent communities. HOA helps homeowners find reputable home and auto repair and other consumer services, and staffers investigate more than 1,000 resident complaints during the year.

Thousands of residents across Sun City have been getting invitations to join the Sun City Home Owners Association.

"Our goal is to get 6,000 additional members. The residents of Sun City are requesting more and more services, and we either would have to increase our dues or get additional members to provide the services everyone wants," said Blaine Donaldson, HOA president.

Plastic-bag door hangers were placed on doors by members of the Lions Club.

In each is a letter of invitation to join HOA, an explanation of the benefits of membership, a membership application and pledge card.



BETH MCGOVERN/DAILY NEWS-SUN

HOA past presidents from left: back, Dixon Wightman, Paul McCleester, Paul Schwartz, Kenneth Powers; middle, May Huber-White, Howard Matthias, Marge Greenhalge, Jack McLaughlin; seated, Ellis Danner, Byron Healy.

The application also can serve to update the HOA/PORA Sun Cities telephone directory, since numbers in that book are listed and corrected at resident request, not by U S WEST.

The Sun City Taxpayers Association, founded in 1969, has intervened in numerous utility rate cases over the years, resulting in hundreds of thousands of dollars in savings to

Sun City ratepayers.

Depending on what happens to a controversial stadium bill, SCTA might soon rally against another taxpayer-funded stadium.

In 1994, SCTA lost a battle with the Maricopa County Stadium District over the imposition of a quarter-cent tax to finance a major league baseball stadium.

The SCTA's past accomplishments include successful challenges to the state sales tax on food and the so-called "Sun City School Tax."

The organization is run by a 15-member elected board of directors, which monitors the activities of other community organizations and keeps close tabs on county and state legislation.

# Boswell blooms at 30

## Addition buoys cardiac care

MONICA ALONZO-DUNSMOOR  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

It was supposed to be a quaint 50-bed Spanish-style hospital — Sun City Community Hospital — that would serve residents of Sun City.

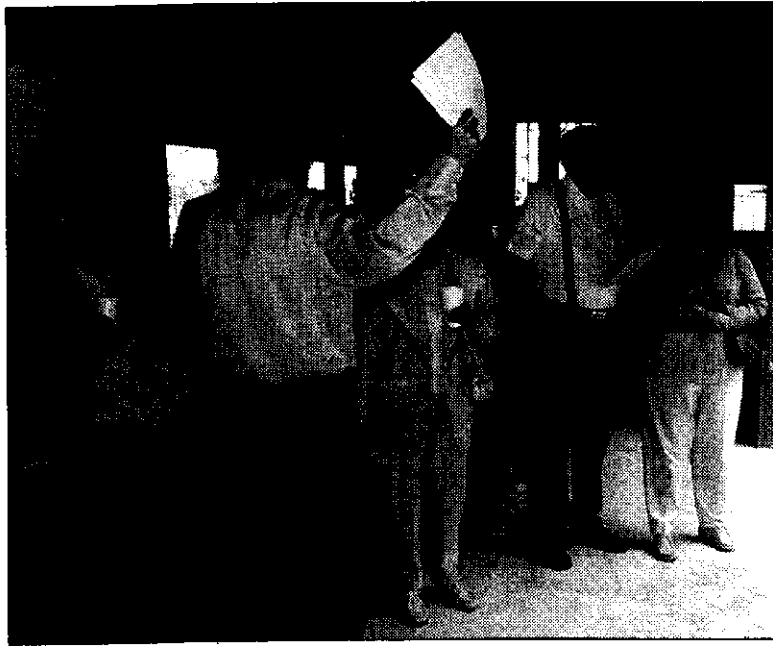
What was intended for Sun City turned into a four-tower, 319-bed hospital — which continues to expand — that serves the Northwest Valley.

The idea for a local hospital stemmed from the community which was aware that ambulance service was non-existent in 1965 and the closest hospital at the time was in Phoenix.

The following year, plans were made for the 50-bed hospital and were received with overwhelming joy from the retirement community.

Del Webb Development Co. agreed to donate land for the hospital and build it at cost.

When the community members received a \$1.2 million grant from the Boswell family, plans were expanded to include at least 100 beds, top-notch accommodations and the services would be for all surround-



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

ing communities, not just Sun City.

In 1968, the hospital's board of directors decided to start an auxiliary. It started with 31 founders and 127 charter members. That year, the first thrift shop opened and donations started pouring in.

By 1969, community support was high and strong, vigorous efforts were made to raise money and another \$25,000 was donated by the Boswell Foundation.

A hospital was born — Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital. On Dec. 16, 1969, the local fund drive exceeded

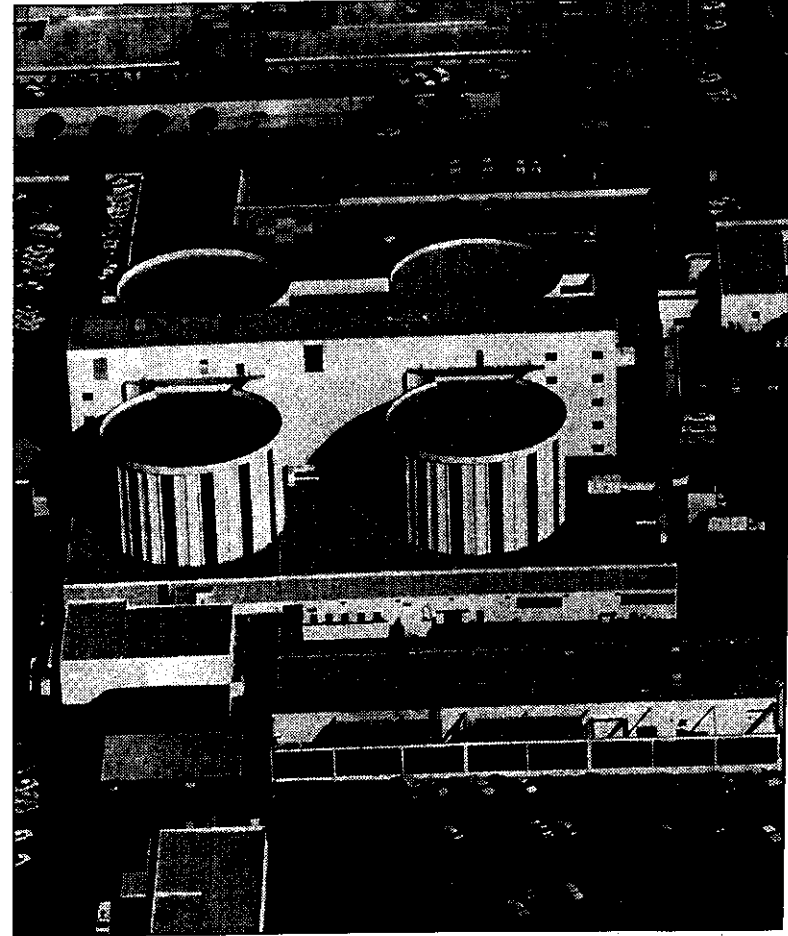
\$1 million.

"I joined the Sun Health Auxiliary in 1970," said Marjorie Clifford. "It was really wonderful. Everyone was for the hospital."

She remembers knocking on doors, asking residents to donate money to support the hospital.

About 5,000 people, including Clifford, gathered in the west parking lot of the newly completed building on Nov. 6, 1970, to celebrate the dedication of the \$5-million hospital.

"When we had the grand opening in the parking lot, they were so happy for having a hos-



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO

pital there. Everyone was pulling together," Clifford said.

Before the first patient was admitted to the hospital at 12:30 p.m. on Nov. 16 1970, four emergency cases made their way through the emergency room.

From that day, Boswell Memorial Hospital continued to grow under the umbrella of Sun Health.

With continued community support, the 435,000-square-foot hospital is adding 151,000 square-feet to create a "Heart Hospital within a Hospital" to

consolidate Sun Health's heart-related services for comprehensive cardiac care for the more than 8,000 heart-related surgeries performed each year.

But the services don't stop there.

During the past 30 years, Sun Health has continued to expand its community health and wellness services to include Alzheimer's care, behavioral health services, a cancer program, two community education centers, hospice and personal care services.

# Institute makes notable advancements

**MONICA ALONZO-DUNSMOOR**  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Imagine a research center where scientists study and perhaps find cures for diseases associated with aging.

Boston, New York and Los Angeles might come to mind. But in a community of 38,000 people, imagination flies out when you enter the door of the Sun Health Research Institute.

It wasn't enough for Sun Health officials to offer medical services to the community through Boswell Memorial Hospital — they wanted to go a step further.

The idea for a research institute came from several people, mostly those associated with Sun Health Corp., said Joseph Rogers, president and senior scientist of the Sun Health

Research Institute, originally known as the Institute for Biogerontology Research.

There were four people who were instrumental in the institute's inception — Austin Turner, then chief executive officer of Sun Health; Hokte Bang, chairman of the Sun Health board; and Bob and Cleo Roberts, two prominent residents.

"Bang and Turner had the idea that not only should Sun Health be concerned about giving citizens the best possible medical treatment when they are sick, but also that Sun Health should be concerned with keeping the residents of Sun City from getting sick in the first place," Rogers said. "They wanted to expand from the hospital to a research institute to find cures to keep people out of hospitals in the first place."

And so, in 1986, with seed money from the Roberts family and Bob and Ruth Hoover, another prominent family in the area, the Sun Health Research Institute was created.

"They conducted a nationwide hunt for someone to run the institute and I was fortunate enough to be selected," Rogers said.

During the past 14 years, the research institute has been a driving force in research on age-related illnesses.

In Alzheimer's research, the institute is one of the best-known centers, having made discoveries that anti-inflammatory and cholesterol lowering drugs may be useful in the treatment of Alzheimer's.

In Parkinson's, we're just beginning to make discoveries.

"It's grown like lightning.

There is no other institute that I know of like it. It's experienced phenomenal growth," Rogers said. "Our mission is to understand and develop cures for the major age-related illness that plague our community, particularly Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, arthritis and vision impairments. The whole idea at Sun Health is to manage all the major health and age-related illness, and to go beyond that to try to cure them before people need to go to the hospital."

Roger is confident that the upcoming years hold great things for the institute.

"I think the future is very bright," he said. "We're coming here very soon to prevent Alzheimer's disease from ever occurring, and though the work, a lot of things (diseases) are going to yield."




**STEVE CHERIEK**DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sun Health Research Institute takes shape on the Boswell Campus.



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Veterans have been a part of the community since its inception and pay homage to their fallen comrades by placing flags on graves at Sunland Cemetery.



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# Nosy neighbors



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTOS

Pelicans, geese and swans began flocking to Sun City when the barren desert was developed with green areas dotted by lakes.

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# Sun Bowl attracts galaxy of stars

FROM DAILY NEWS-SUN FILES

**C**ock an ear in an empty Sun Bowl and listen for the memories — the music of Liberace and Lawrence Welk, lip-smacking strawberry sundaes at Mother's Day Strawberry Festivals, foaming root beer at Father's Day Root Beer Busts, rustling flags massed in patriotic splendor on Veterans Day.

The Sun Bowl in the beginning ...

Nov. 28, 1966. The Luke Air Force Base Band plays at the Sun Bowl's dedication, a beginning for Sun Bowl sounds of music that span years and styles: college bands, military bands, Lawrence Welk, Rosemary Clooney, Harry James, Benny Goodman ...

The Sun Bowl, with its landmark band shell and grassy seating room by Mother Nature, has its history in the Del E. Webb Development Co., creators of Sun City, and its present owners, Recreation

Centers of Sun City.

Former Devco President John Meeker was there during the planning stages of the Sun Bowl. Was the Sun Bowl his idea?

"I get credit for it," Meeker said in 1985.

## FACTOID

**Sun Bowl can seat up to 5,000 people, more if everyone squeezes in.**

The Sun Bowl, he said, was planned with a dual purpose.

Devco was looking for a way to give entertainment to residents,

as well as attract people to look at Sun City.

Names like Liberace and Lawrence Welk, offered at a reasonable price, were the drawing power to bring Arizona winter visitors and people from Phoenix out for a look-see at Sun City's homes and Sun City's retirement lifestyle.

Show biz headliners and community events like states' day picnics made the Sun Bowl an instant success.

The Webb Sun Bowl marketing tool-entertainment formula fared especially well when



Fans surround Lawrence Welk during a Sun Bowl show in the 1960s.

DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO

**See Sun Bowl, Page 59**

# Sun Bowl

From Page 58

Devco was building Sun City's Phase I.

Under Meeker's leadership, the company offered the Sun Bowl for sale to the rec centers.

"I did that before I left," said Meeker, who died earlier this year. "We were phasing out of Sun City and a decision had to be made whether they wanted it, or we'd sell it," he said.

Because the Sun Bowl had become a part of the community and because the facility had been created for the "use of all Sun City residents," Meeker said he had "felt strongly it was their (Rec Centers) shot to call, whether they wanted it."

After a 1981 canvassing by the rec centers of its membership showed member interest in the facility, an additional \$2-a-year Sun Bowl-dedicated fee was added to members' \$50 annual assessment.

On Sept. 1, 1984, the Rec Centers paid Devco a consideration fee of \$10 after having operated the Sun Bowl under a \$1-a-year, three-year lease/option to buy contract signed July 7, 1981.



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTOS

Wisconsinites have packed the Sun Bowl for their annual party since the outdoor amphitheater was completed Nov. 28, 1966.



Entertainer Victor Borge, above, tickles the ivories for a Sun Bowl crowd. Pat Boone, left, dazzles an audience on March 6, 1973.

# A wide array of living styles

From the very beginning, Sun City offered housing to accommodate people at any level of health

BRUCE ELLISON  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

**W**hen homes in Sun City first were offered to the public in 1960, there was only a handful of models — and they were all one-story, single-family homes on relatively small lots.

But over the 40 years since, a variety of housing styles has appeared, some of them offered by the Del Webb Corp., and others — a few — by private developers.

Facilities for those who could no longer live alone were among the first new housing types. They developed as church lead-



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO

In 1963, members of the United Church of Sun City stand on the future site of Sun Valley Lodge.

Peoria Avenue off 106th Avenue near the Sun Bowl



STEVED CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Luxurious condos such as the Heritage Palmeras attract retirees who no longer want the responsibility of home ownership.

from what were then called retirement homes to nursing homes, assisted living facilities and apartment complexes.

homes, upgrading them, and reselling them at a profit.

The result is that newcomers can find a variety of styles and

out, with perhaps a few odd spots available for the odd home.

● Existing homes are on the market regularly in Sun City. Prices range from the mid-\$50s for one-bedroom condos to a quarter million dollars for an opulent home on a golf course lot. One Sun City property changed hands last year at just below \$300,000.

● Rentals. There are fewer rental options in the Sun City than in most big cities. Many condo units now are owned by individual investors and offered for winter visitors or on a year-round basis, but not all condos permit rentals.

In the south part of Sun City, just off 99th Avenue north of Olive Avenue, are two large rental complexes.

At first glance, looking at the structures and their location, many residents would say they are in Peoria, but they're not. They are officially part of Sun City, were built by Webb, and carry recreation centers

...realized there would need to be a community answer to that problem of aging.

Remember that in the 1960s, life expectancy at the normal retirement age of 65 was only a few additional years.

Sun Valley Lodge and Royal Oaks are two examples of that type of housing.

But in the early years, in Phase I south of Grand Avenue, the Del Webb Development Co. (Devco) experimented with other housing types.

There's a set of two-story units overlooking South Golf Course near Fairway Recreation Center, for instance; and some two-story homes south of

There's even a large tract with three- and four-acre lots, outbuildings and separate garages and adjacent pastures where horses graze. Yes, in Sun City. (It's called Rancho Estates, west of 111th Avenue south of Peoria Avenue.)

But there aren't a lot of any of them, for the Del Webb folks eventually concluded that the single-family home was where it was at.

However, after Webb completed the community about 20 years ago, it became apparent that other housing lifestyles would be needed as residents aged.

That would mean everything

Of course, as the community expanded over 20 years, housing styles changed: homes became larger, with more amenities and accessories.

By the time Webb was working on Phase III, north of Bell Road, you could spend \$100,000 for a Sun City home.

And you certainly can today, as golf course lots command a \$20,000 premium while the few lake lots available bring even more.

Older homes are fast being remodeled and upgraded, as a trip around the community's side streets will document.

Some retirees even make a living buying run-down estate

size. Even the Baby Boomers who might afford Sun City Grand or Scottsdale have moved in.

When it comes to housing today, new arrivals just starting a retirement lifestyle and those having a hard time living on their own have all the choices they had before, and then some.

Here's a look at some choices available in this 40-year-old, but still vibrant, community:

● New homes are one thing now missing in Sun City, though they can be found in Sun City Grand and other nearby master-planned communities. Sun City itself is built

privileges. Individuals, sometimes after inheriting them, often rent out single-family homes; they are cheaper on a year-round basis than monthly in season.

There is a limited number of new rental apartments in major complexes. One example is the Fountains in Sun City, off 111th Avenue and Grand.

● Independent Living. Rental apartments are called independent living facilities if they provide meal service or limited other services such as changes of linen, maid service or scheduled or on-demand

**See Housing, Page 61**

## A new generation joins its parents in embracing retirement lifestyle

JOHN GUZZON  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

For every Sun City resident, there is a long and rich life history that has resulted in the retirement times of today.

Relocation often brings separation from the retirees' families, but in some cases, parents and children both have retired to Sun City, beginning a new, unique life together.

Such is the case with Nancy Root and her mother, Beryl Brandes.

Brandes moved to Sun City in 1972 from Pennsylvania and

was joined 18 years later by Nancy and her husband, Bob, who formerly lived in Washington, D.C.

"I was a little frightened for her (Nancy) because she is so much younger than those who normally come to Sun City, but she fit right in," Brandes said. "She found places for herself. She has been a wonderful addition to Sun City and it has opened up my eyes to what Sun City can be."

Root said that after she moved to the area she was followed by her daughter and granddaughter, although they

live in nearby Avondale.

"They followed the trek out when they saw the lifestyle and didn't want to suffer through the winters," Root said.

Beryl and Nancy attend the opera, Theater Works, the Sun City Chamber Music Society and will become involved with the Sun Cities Symphony of the West Valley later this year. While they share activities, Beryl said, individuality is a must.

"I want them (Nancy and Bob) to have their own life so I

**See Generations, Page 61**



LISA GOETTSCHE/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Beryl Brandes, left, and her daughter Nancy Root both live in Sun City.

# Housing

From Page 60

transportation.

Such units appeal to those who don't care to handle their own home maintenance chores, or who physically can't do the work, and to those who don't care to cook often. Generally, those facilities include breakfast and one other meal a day as part of their fee.

One example is the independent living area at Brighton Gardens by Marriott in Sun City.

Some of the rental and independent living facilities have recreation centers privileges — that is, the renters may use the swimming pools, golf courses, club

rooms and bowling at recreation facilities in Sun City that are intended for members only.

There may be an additional yearly fee for that Centers use.

● Assisted living. For those who can no longer be fully independent, but who do not need medical care, an assisted living facility is a good choice. These facilities often are part of a total complex that ranges from independent living to assisted living, and even to skilled nursing units. They also often included an Alzheimer's or dementia unit for those whose condition is troubling but not debilitating.

The co-location of the facilities is intended to assist in fostering the ability to age in place — to become less able to care for oneself without having to move out, away from friends and spouses, to get the care needed.

# Generations

From Page 60

don't have to share anything with them," Brandes said. "We don't have to do this business of I have to call her every day. That is important."

Make no mistake, however — they enjoy the closeness that family brings.

"It really is nice to have family so close because it just makes life a nicer experience," Root said. "We have all of our family out in the West now. I enjoy the weather and the boards I serve on in

Sun City and I enjoy being associated with the boards my husband serves on."

For Brandes, the main source of help she needs from her daughter is handling the computer age. A prime example of this occurred recently when she purchased a portable phone that was not as easy to operate as simply picking up the receiver.

"I don't know a thing about computers or anything like that. That's where it is nice to have a family member living close who is younger and can decipher things for me.

"The main thing is if I ever get in any sort of jam, they (Nancy and Bob) are here," Brandes said.

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# Economic might: Retirees fuel business boon

BRUCE ELLISON  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

**W**hen Del Webb planned Sun City in the late 1950s, he foresaw a retirement community, not an economic powerhouse.

But the idea he created 40 years ago nowadays does have considerable economic might.

Consider:

- Sun Citians have about \$1.5 billion in the bank, an average of \$40,500 for each resident, and a figure that's far above the national or even state average per person.

- Social Security checks poured \$24 million into Sun City alone in December 1998, the latest month for which data are available. With two benefit hikes, the total is higher now, and likely comes to more than about \$300 million a year.

- Medicare estimates that it pays about \$6,000 a year on behalf of the average recipient, much more in the final year of life. So the estimated 38,000 people in Sun City are getting about \$225 million in Medicare

benefits, most of it going to local doctors, hospitals and other health care providers.

- The homes that the Del Webb Corp. built are worth far more today than what residents originally paid for them. Phase I homes went for \$9,000 or so, while the typical models in Phases II and III rose into the \$30s and \$60s.

Today, typical condos and homes condos sell for \$50,000 to \$85,000, and values have been rising rapidly in the last few years.

The age-restricted population, seniors all, soon led to the rapid development of a medical complex to serve it. Today, Sun Health Corp. is the major player, and with its operations in Sun City West, Surprise, Litchfield Park and Wickenburg, is a \$250-million a year powerhouse operating its own Medicare HMO.

It has attracted more than a hundred medical practitioners to its Sun Health Properties office complexes, and operates a nationally recognized research institute, nursing



SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Business boomed at Del Webb's Hiway House when it opened New Year's Day 1960.

homes, two retirement complexes and specialized Alzheimer's and even special-needs care centers.

An offshoot of the aging population has been the development of apartment, independent living and assisted living complexes in Sun City, or near it, to serve residents who no longer can, or want to, live in their own single family homes.

The Webb company initially provided many commercial ser-

vices for Sun City residents in the early years, building a sewer and water system and treatment plants — later sold to Citizens Utilities Co. — putting in a cemetery and funeral home (Sunland), now part of a national chain; and developing shopping areas and using them to lure in new grocery, drug and other stores to an area that was far from the populated areas of Phoenix.

The growth in Sun City also

spurred commercial construction in Youngtown, where lower rents and less restrictive use rules allowed golf car and other repair-related services to flourish.

But one service Webb once provided in Sun City — temporary lodgings for visitors — disappeared completely when the Kings Inn at 107th and Grand avenues, a motel that accommodated visitors who might want to buy a home, was torn down and replaced by a super-market.

There are no motels or hotels in Sun City, though many are close by and some call themselves Sun City hostleries.

Today the Sun City shopping areas have been sold, in some cases more than once, and have different owners.

While Sun Citians may not have much current income, they do have wealth, one reason why a state study found retirees are able to spend more than their reported income for many years.

UF SC History SC Outlook 1988 April 12, 1988

# Meeker says: Use Shared Revenues to preserve Del Webb's Heritage

I'm sure there are enough smart people out there in Sun City to get their heads together, organize as a city, and put their eight million dollars a year to work preserving Del Webb's heritage for the long term future.

For the first 20 years of Sun City's existence I was closely associated with its development and its people. Everything was going our way. Our neighbors in the Valley and the world watched in admiration as Sun City blossomed into a beautiful city with over 40,000 proud, competent and moderately affluent homeowners. Anything Del Webb and Sun City people wanted they got. Public officials and the media never missed an opportunity to associate themselves with an obviously successful new kind of city. The people elsewhere in the Valley respected and admired Sun City people for their good judgement, vigor and volunteerism. A bright future for Sun City seemed assured.

Since 1980 my contacts with Sun

See Meeker, Page 3



John Meeker — President Del E. Webb Development Co. 1965-81.

## Sun City to pay for CAP Water

It appears now that, starting in 1991, customers of the Sun City Water Co. will be required to pay for an excessively large allocation of Colorado River water even though they didn't order the water and have no use for the water.

On October 10, 1985, David Chardavoyne, Asst. Vice President of Sun City Water Co., and now Vice President of Citizens Utilities of Stamford, Conn., signed a contract with the Central Arizona Water Conservation District to purchase 5,160,000,000 gallons per year of Colorado River Water (CAP water). This is one and a third billion gallons or 35% more than Sun City uses in a year.

The contract is a take-or-pay contract. Sun City Water Co. (SCWC) is required to pay for the water whether it uses it or not. The take-or-pay provision will become effective when the CAP canal is completed to Tucson and it is anticipated Sun City Water Co. will start paying for its alloca-

See CAP, Page 4

## MEEKER

*Continued from Page 1*

City and Sun City people have decreased but I have become increasingly concerned about Sun City's future. I am dismayed by some of the changes that have taken place in Sun City and by Sun City's diminishing reputation outside Sun City.

Sun City's master plan called for no multi-story dwellings and Del Webb did not build for the rental market. Now I'm told that over 2000 multi-story, high-density housing units have been built in the last seven years and the selling price of existing homes are falling for the first time in history.

Last April Maricopa County granted a franchise to Sun City Water Co. to serve a large new development north of Sun City. Hearings were held, advertisements were put in the official county journal and no one in Sun City knew about it until it was discovered by accident in December.

Why are Sun City's interests being ignored? Why are critical decisions being made concerning Sun City with little or no input from Sun City people? Why has the media's appraisal of Sun City people changed from respect to criticism and ridicule?

It is because Sun City people have lost communication with the

outside world. Sun City's interests cannot be protected and its objectives attained unless those interests are identified and communicated.

Del Webb's battery of planners, engineers, lawyers, and public relations people moved on to Sun City West in 1980 and Sun City was left with no mechanism for receiving information, studying its impact, devising plans, conferring with governmental entities and informing Sun City people and the public at large.

Who in Sun City has the information and the authority to answer the questions of a reporter, a County Supervisor, a legislator, or a concerned citizen?

A city of 40,000 people just can't get along without a city government under the direction of an elected council with a full time professional city manager and staff.

I have gone over the municipal income and expense figures prepared by Citizens for Self-Government and I believe them to be well documented and realistic. They correlate very well with the Farrell Report commissioned by Devco back in 1978.

And a final word about the golf courses. I understand that Sun City's golf courses are in financial trouble. Sun City's eight golf courses were an essential element in the Sun City success story and it is in the interest of every pro-

perty owner to see that these community assets are not allowed to deteriorate.

The subject of municipal subsidies to the Recreation Centers was studied by Devco's attorneys and they advised that municipal support of the centers was legally feasible. I understand that Sun City's share of state shared revenues is now up to about eight million dollars a year, so it should not be necessary to increase green fees or rec. center dues to keep Sun City's golf courses in tip-top shape.

## Your honor, who owns the water rights — the man who owns the land or the man who owns the pump?

A judge of the Superior Court of Arizona will decide. For over a hundred years there was never any question. Water rights went with the land. However, when the Groundwater Management Act of 1980 went into effect, a carelessly written section in the regulations may take away from Sun City landowners the Boswell Farms groundwater rights they thought they acquired when they bought their properties.

The Sun City Water Co. claims it owns the grandfathered ground-

**Incorporation Fable**  
Incorporation will add another layer of government.

**Incorporation Fact**  
Jurisdiction over Sun City would be removed from an overburdened county and placed in the hands of our people. Not another layer of government but one that works for Sun City exclusively.

water rights appurtenant to all the land in Sun City. Over 8000 Sun City residents signed petitions saying they own the water rights. WHO WILL WIN?

Back in Stamford, Conn. in the corporate offices of Citizens Utilities, a battery of top notch lawyers started working ten years ago preparing the Sun City Water Company's case. Here in Phoenix, in the law offices of Evans, Kitchell & Jenckes, P.C., top experts in Arizona law have been doing the same thing for the water company.

Who is working on Sun City



# Sun City evolves as its amenities age

By Lesley Wright  
The Republic | azcentral.com



The Sun City water volleyball club plays at the Oakmont Recreation Center in December. Recreation-board members update infrastructure and follow new trends to keep the community vibrant. STACIE SCOTT/THE REPUBLIC

Sun City, the pioneering West Valley retirement enclave, continues to attract new residents, with buyers modernizing the homes one dwelling at a time.

To make sure those retirees stay, the incoming Recreation Centers of Sun City board has to ensure that the community's pools, tennis courts and other amenities do not deteriorate.

The board of the non-profit agency tasked with keeping the half-century-old retirement community viable had its annual election last month.

The new directors on the nine-director board are Dan Schroeder, a retired construction manager; Peter Lee, who retired from the U.S. Department of Defense; and financial expert Michael Kennedy. None of the candidates promised great changes during the campaign.

The secret to the continued success of Sun City, a 9,000-acre community in unincorporated Maricopa County, appears to be managing gradual changes. A critical part of that is maintaining and upgrading key community features, which real-estate agents say is the biggest draw for prospective Sun City residents.

For the outgoing board, that meant taking cost-efficient steps for the future. They installed solar panels over parking spaces at recreation centers, despite skepticism from some residents, and replaced aging pipes and other infrastructure.

Homes are also getting a face-lift. Looks can be deceiving to visitors driving past 1960s-era houses and large recreation buildings that developer Del E. Webb constructed to wow the first generation of retirees to move into the community.

"Much of our well-built housing stock has been renovated by owners over the years, so oftentimes the exterior may appear the same, but the interiors have been thoroughly remodeled," said Joelyn Higgins, a Sun City spokeswoman.

An average of seven new homeowners every day buy the concrete-block homes Webb began building in 1960. The new, younger residents help the community transform slowly, even as newer, fancier retirement communities open around them.



The Sun City water volleyball club plays at the Oakmont Recreation Center in December. Recreation-board members update infrastructure and follow new trends to keep the community vibrant. STACIE SCOTT/THE REPUBLIC

"Sun City periodically needs to reinvent itself and does so as each new generation retires," she said.

Outgoing board members advised successors that guiding that reinvention includes building repairs and accommodating changing recreation tastes.

Cord Angier, 73, is stepping down from the board after a three-year term. He advised the new directors to research the older buildings that may have problems and to learn about new trends.



## SUN CITY TIMELINE

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*Source: Sun City Visitors Center*

"We have looked at the future and have tried our best to figure out what the younger generation will want to do," Angier said. "The ones we've talked to said they want Sun City — they want the amenities and they don't want to pay a lot for it."

### Overbuilt amenities

New board members learn quickly that keeping up with seven recreation centers, two bowling centers, eight golf courses and assorted clubhouses is a challenge in itself.

Kennedy noted that Webb "overbuilt" Sun City's recreational attractions since it was the model community for what would become an international brand. The later versions of Sun City had fewer recreational centers and golf courses. Marketing continues to tout that Sun City has the most amenities for the lowest annual fees — \$456 per household — among all the Sun City-style retirement communities built since.

The new board director moved to the Valley in 1969 and watched Sun City grow up.

"I lived in a number of different places in the Valley, but I

knew I would live in Sun City," Kennedy said. "I've talked to people in others, but the fees are larger and the facilities are smaller."

To tend to those facilities, Sun City stewards must keep an eye out for expensive repairs and do inspections to avoid things like the Sundial roof collapse, Angier said.

That catastrophe occurred at 4:15 a.m. June 19, 2006, at the Sundial Recreation Center. No one was injured when one of the beams holding the wide-span roof collapsed. It has since been replaced with a steel-truss roof, and the facility looks almost new.

Keeping the golf courses fresh and attractive is believed to be critical in luring new homeowners. When Angier took a look beneath the greens during his term, he saw how the original piping had aged. Those also are being replaced.

"The main waterlines (to the courses) were so old and brittle, if you put enough pressure on them they would just break," Angier said.

Future boards might have to contend with problems at the 33-acre Viewpoint Lake, which has a lining leak that could cost \$10 million or more to repair. The board worked out a plan with the Arizona Department of Water Resources earlier this year to get administrative relief by ensuring the lake's water is managed efficiently.

For every headache brought on by aging facilities, the community takes a step forward.

The board installed solar panels on covered parking at the recreation centers, launched an electronic voting system and converted tennis courts to pickleball courts to meet next-generation sports demands.

Facility upkeep and repairs are funded by the community's Preservation and Improvement Fund, which had a balance of

about \$13 million at the end of last year.

### Volunteer community

Incoming board member Lee said he believes the board needs to build on past successes, making adjustments where necessary but otherwise continuing to keep Sun City on budget and debt-free. Since the community is in unincorporated Maricopa County, Sun City lacks a municipal government and relies on volunteers.

"We all have to take a turn," Lee said of his run for the board. "This is a volunteer community. The initiatives have to come from residents. We have to listen to them."

The large talent pool of retirees helps keep costs down, Kennedy said. One retired architect recently worked up a way to relocate four pickleball courts while work was being done on the Marinette Recreation Center. The resident submitted detailed plans and the board didn't have to hire an architect.

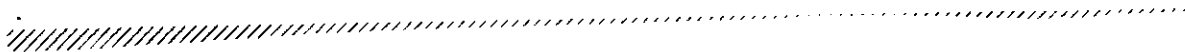
Golfing has declined nationally as a recreational activity. Kennedy suggested that if it really takes a nose dive over the years, Sun City residents will find a way to use the courses for other things, adapting without too much visible change.

Technology also is seeping in. Elections were electronic for the first time last year, and Sun City is launching a marketing website at [suncityaz.us](http://suncityaz.us) to attract retiring Baby Boomers, Higgins said.

Angier said that reform efforts, such as adopting Facebook and other social media to communicate with Sun City residents, likely will have their detractors.

"Absolutely there will be resistance," he said. "We're old people."

But Lee said the generations moving in will help build a technological foundation.



By LAURIE HURD-MOORE  
Sun Cities Independent

When they first learn of the existence of Lizard Acres, some Sun City West residents react with a grin and possibly, a chuckle.

They mentally categorize the name with other "quaint of Arizona designations," such as Slaughter House Gulch, Polygamy Creek and the Lucky Cuss Mine.

Yet, long before the Del E. Webb Corp., purchased the property in 1971 and developed a strip part of Sun City West, the Circle 1 Livestock Company Inc. — unofficially known as Lizard Acres — was a thriving business.

Circle 1 at one point in 1970, employed 45 people to manage and maintain nearly 40,000 head of cattle, according to Mark and Gloria Gemmill of Sun City.

The Gemmills called the place home for 30 years, raising two sons in a house once located on the site.

The feedlot included three main houses and more than a dozen trailer homes.

Cattle feed was produced on 1,000 acres of the 1,800-acre ranch. There was enough surplus feed, says the retired foreman, to supply other area feedlots.

Cattle pens comprised approximately 80 acres of the property.

The Circle 1 Livestock Company Inc., was designed to be, according owner, J.C. "Charlie" Wetzler, to be a "hotel for cattle."

Mr. Gemmill says, "It started out to be a privately- owned feedlot.

"We kept building on and took on other people's cattle to feed. It just kept getting bigger and

seems like every year, we would have to build more pens."

Cattle from as far away as Florida, went to build the Circle 1 Livestock Company Inc.

Circle 1 evolved from a smaller feedlot which was started in 1947, "The Spurlock and Wetzler Feedlot."

Lance Spurlock and Charlie Wetzler had both run cattle together on a ranch in Holbrook.

When the men decided to move their operation to the Valley they leased a feedlot and first employed Mr. Gemmill in 1947.

Mr. Gemmill was raised in Crown King.

Soon, the partners decided they wanted a feedlot of their own, so they bought this "desert" in the West Valley.

They were to call their new business, "Lizard Acres/Spurlock and Wetzler Feed Lot."

The business was located one mile from the intersections of Dysart Road and Grand Avenue.

"I don't think it was called Circle 1 until about '50," recalls the former company foreman.

The partnership between Spurlock and Wetzler was to dissolve in 1954. Wetzler would become the sole owner of the company.

Mr. Gemmill was to be trained in all aspects of the feedlot operation.

"It was kind of split up. There were several of us who were capable of working any part of it.

"I took care of all of the hiring and firing, the farming and operation of the feed mill and the construction of company structures," he explains.

Construction at Lizard Acres, adds Mr. Gemmill, continued until shortly before the Del E. Webb Corp., leveled the business.

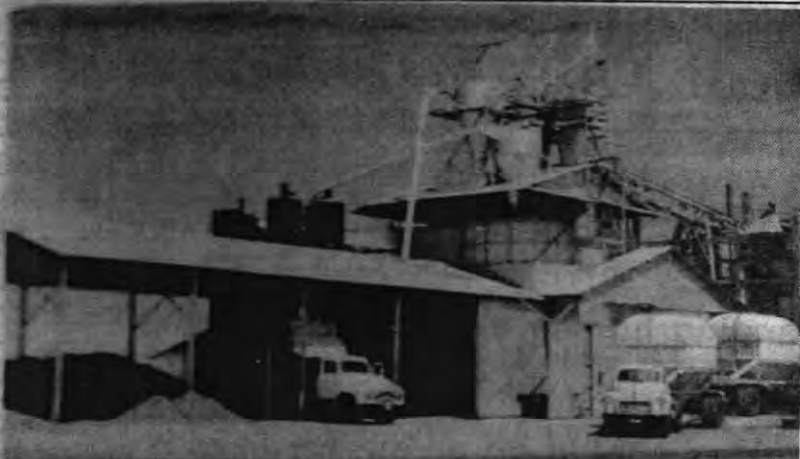


VF SC HISTORICAL BKG. OF SC AREA

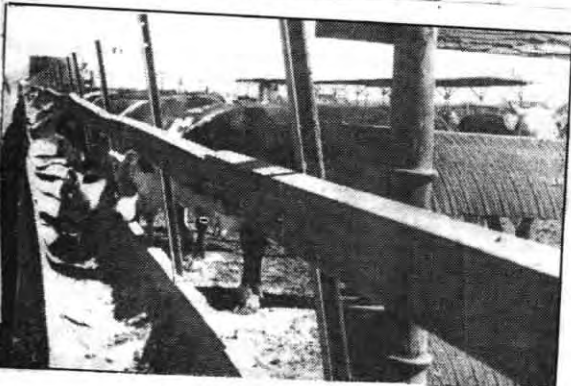
OVER



This sign points to what would become Sun City West.



CIRCLE 1 LIVESTOCK CO. was also in the business of raising cattle feed. Lizard Acres produced enough feed not only to feed its cattle, but to sell to neighboring ranches. The business of raising cattle was an ever expanding one, according to Mark Gemmill of Sun City. Mr. Gemmill was once the foreman of the Circle 1 Livestock Company Inc. The feedlot grew to accommodate nearly 40,000 head of cattle.



Left are early visitors from as far away as Florida. Below a sign on Grand provides shade for a retiree in hopes of selling his car.

VFSC Historical Bkg of SC Area

# Fields became links

—From Page 26

"We probably ran cattle over where many of your (Sun Citians') houses are," McMicken said.

The land Boswell owned was later released to Del Webb in a partnership arrangement under which Sun City was built.

James G. Boswell II said the hospital, named after Colonel Walter O. Boswell, gave Sun City the justification to jump north of the railroad tracks.

"I spent all my time leveling the land while Webb spent all of his time putting hills in it," Boswell said. "We didn't know whether it would be 1,000 people or 2,000 people. Being part of Sun City is something that has always made me proud because it was something that was needed."



Submitted photo

**FIELD OF DREAMS** — The humble beginnings of South Grand Avenue was the main road to the area. in Nov. 1959, just before Sun City was established. The humble beginnings of South Grand Avenue was the main road to the area.



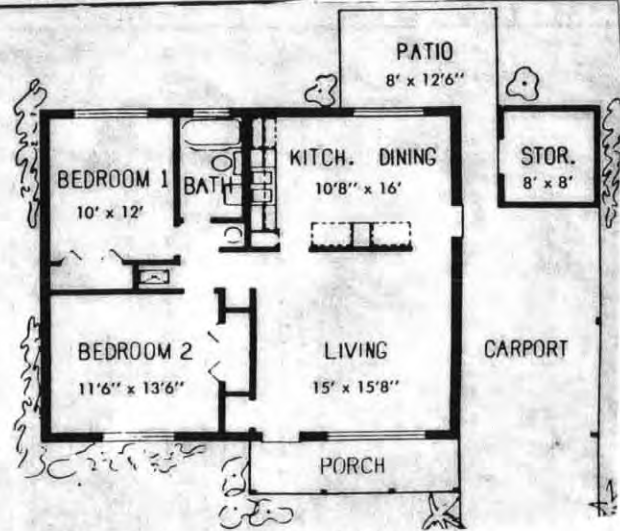
Submitted graphics

## 2 BEDROOMS, 1 BATH, PORCH & PATIO

This lovely home is perfect for two-person living and offers compact efficiency for easy care. Designed with spacious kitchen-dining room, big-windowed living room and king-size master bedroom, it features such convenience details as an entrance directly from the carport, guest closet at the front door and large walk-in closets with floor-to-ceiling louvered doors.

### Plan 1-C

**\$8,500.00 including all improvements**



VF SC Historical  
Bkg. of SC Area



Daily News-Sun photo

**SUBJECT TO CHANGE** — This panoramic scene of Marinette was photographed in 1959 prior to Sun City's development.

## Jan. 1, 1960

Sun City celebrates its grand opening. In the first 72 hours, 237 homes are sold.

## Jan. 28, 1961

Fairway Recreation Center opens. Formerly known as Town Hall, Fairway joins the first recreation center, Oakmont, which had been known as the Community Center.

## April 9, 1963

Sun City Home Owners Association forms. The HOA is a spinoff of the original Civic Association, founded in 1960.

## Dec. 1, 1964

Sun City's only official incorporation vote of the people fails by a considerable margin.

# Sun City evolves as its amenities age

By Lesley Wright

The Republic | azcentral.com

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A Sun City resident rides his golf cart through the neighborhood. STACIE SCOTT/THE REPUBLIC

**“Sun City periodically needs to reinvent itself and does so as each new generation retires.”**

**JOELYN HIGGINS**

Sun City spokeswoman

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“I lived in a number of different places in the Valley, but I knew I would live in Sun City,” Kennedy said. “I’ve talked to people in others, but the fees are larger and the facilities are smaller.”

To tend to those facilities, Sun City stewards must keep an eye out for expensive repairs and do inspections to avoid things like the Sundial roof collapse, Angier said.

That catastrophe occurred at 4:15 a.m. June 19, 2006, at the Sundial Recreation Center. No one was injured when one of the beams holding the wide-span roof collapsed. It has since been replaced with a steel-truss roof, and the facility looks almost new.

Keeping the golf courses

fresh and attractive is believed critical to luring new homeowners. When Angier took a look beneath the greens during his term, he saw how the original piping had aged. Those also are being replaced.

“The main waterlines (to the courses) were so old and brittle, if you put enough pressure on them they would just break,” Angier said.

Future boards might have to contend with problems at the 33-acre Viewpoint Lake, which has a lining leak that could cost \$10 million or more to repair. The rec board worked out a plan with the Arizona Department of Water Resources earlier this year to get administrative relief by ensuring the lake’s water is managed efficiently.

For every headache brought on by aging facilities, the community takes a step forward.

The board installed solar panels on covered parking at the recreation centers, launched an electronic voting system and converted tennis courts to pickleball courts to meet next-generation sports demands.

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Members of the Sun City water volleyball club play a match at the Oakmont Recreation Center on Dec. 11. STACIE SCOTT/THE REPUBLIC

## SUN CITY

Continued from Page 3

Facility upkeep and repairs are funded by the community's Preservation and Improvement Fund, which had a balance of about \$13 million at the end of last year.

### Volunteer community

Incoming board member Lee said he believes the board needs to build on past successes, making adjustments where necessary but otherwise continuing to keep Sun City on budget and debt-free. Since the community is in unincorporated Maricopa County, Sun City lacks a municipal government and relies on volunteers.

"We all have to take a turn," Lee said of his run for the board. "This is a volunteer community. The initiatives have to come from residents. We have to listen to them."

The large talent pool of retirees helps keep costs down, Kennedy said. One retired architect recently worked up a way to relocate four pickleball courts while

work was being done on the Marinette recreation center. The resident submitted detailed plans and the board didn't have to hire an architect.

Golfing has declined nationally as a recreational activity. Kennedy suggested that if it really takes a nose-dive over the years, Sun City residents will find a way to use the courses for other things, adapting without too much visible change.

Technology also is seeping in. Elections were electronic for the first time last year, and Sun City is launching a marketing website at [www.suncityaz.us](http://www.suncityaz.us) in the new year to attract retiring Baby Boomers, Higgins said.

Angier said that reform efforts, such as adopting Facebook and other social media to communicate with Sun City residents, likely will have their detractors.

"Absolutely there will be resistance," he said. "We're old people."

But Lee said the new generations moving in will help build a technological foundation for Sun City.

"Most of them will be more computer savvy," he said. "I think that will be a real asset."



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People who could be grandchildren of original residents are remaking community



SUN CITY EVOLUTION

By Catherine Reagor and Lesley Wright  
The Republic | azcentral.com

Retirees might not line up to buy homes in Sun City as they did when it opened on New Year's Day 1960. Nor are the two bowling alleys as busy as they once were, or golfers having to endure long waits anymore before they tee off on its eight courses.

But today's Sun City isn't a fading image of yesterday's retirement dream. Powered by a stream of renovation-minded younger buyers, the first big retirement community in the West is evolving.

Updated stucco exteriors are found across the



Sun City's relaxed lifestyle is typified by U.S. Postal Service worker Jeff Frehner delivering mail by bike (above) and retirees enjoying amenities such as swimming (left). PHOTOS BY STACIE SCOTT/THE REPUBLIC

street from the 1960s and 1970s cement-block houses. Pickleball courts and upgraded gyms co-exist with golf carts and bowling shoes.

And most of the 27,000 Sun City houses built by Del Webb are occupied as Sun City catches some of the first wave of Baby Boomer retirees, many of whom are young enough to be the grand-

See SUN CITY, Page A4

**Coming Monday:** Del Webb's Sun Cities changed aging for the first wave of retirees. Now, another Arizona developer wants to redefine living after age 55 for the Baby Boomers in an age-restricted community called Victory, in the Buckeye community of Verrado.

## Sun City

Continued from Page A1

children of its original residents.

Newer, flashier developments may get more attention, but residents, real-estate agents and market watchers believe the old community that defined retirement for an earlier generation still has a lot of life left in it.

Some of its tan cement-block homes retain their original look, and the community still has blocks dotted with front yards reminiscent of the 1960s — covered with gravel, sometimes painted green. But new buyers, an average of seven a day for the past two years, are purchasing the relatively low-dollar properties and remaking them, and the community, one household at a time.

Sun City was a development experiment from the start, offering a chance for the first generation of middle-income Americans retiring with the financial stability of Social Security to move from their hometown and mingle with like-minded peers. The concept was wildly successful, with more than 100,000 people visiting Sun City in its first few months.

Now, the community is a petri dish again, an experiment in whether older, large age-restricted communities will thrive or fall into decay in the Baby Boomer era. Newer concepts are being launched just miles away, including DMB Associates' Victory at Verrado, which is being created by the Scottsdale-based developer as a new model for Boomer-friendly communities.

Victory could lure away prospective Sun City buyers. But not every retiree wants, or can afford, posh new digs.

Sun City's median home price was about \$100,000 two years ago. Now, the typical house there costs about \$128,750, compared with \$190,000 in Sun City West and \$240,000 in Sun City Grand.

"Past stereotypes of Sun City are wrong," said Arizona housing analyst RL Brown, who lives in the community with his wife, Joann. "When my parents lived in what is our house, I thought, 'No way will I ever live there.' But Sun City is evolving with its residents."

About 26 percent of Sun City residents are younger than 65, according to U.S. census data released last week. As in most age-restricted communities, at least one of a home's residents has to be 55 or older.

In Sun City West, where development started in the late 1970s, about 30 percent of the community's residents are younger than 65. But median resident age in Sun City West is 76, 3 years older than in Sun City.

"Sun City West residents like to joke that their parents live in Sun City," said Patricia White, who moved to the original retirement community 26 years ago with her husband, Ed. "They aren't so young over there."

Sun City residents are less affluent than those in Sun City West and Sun City Grand.

Sun City's median household income is about \$36,903, according to the census numbers. That's about \$13,000 less than Arizona's median household income. Sun City West's median income is \$46,260.

Boomers generally plan to work some in their retirement, surveys show, and Sun City's closer-in location puts these part-time retirees closer to major employment centers. About 6,000 Sun City residents say they work and commute from their houses.

Women outnumber men in both Sun City and Sun City West. About 57 percent of the residents in each community are women.

"If you have a \$100,000 pocketbook, that is typically a two-bed, two-bath that is in the Sun City area," he said. "If you are looking for something up-to-date, a new style, you are probably going to Sun City West or Sun City Grand."

### Changing demographics

The steady demand and property improvements are in turn pushing up Sun City home prices.

miles, generally between 5th and 11th Avenues, Beardsley Road and 91st and 111th avenues. Large dumpsters, signaling a renovation is under way, can be found on many Sun City blocks, although most neighbors don't like the bins around too long because they mar the clean streets and sidewalks.

The leading edge of the Boomer generation, soon to be the largest wave of retirees in history, already are beginning to redefine retirement in America. Some of the group, born from 1946 through 1964, are buying in the original Sun City.

Gary and Deanna Junso purchased a \$200,000 house in Sun City in 2011. The couple, in their mid-60s, now start their annual three-day drive from South Dakota to their winter home the day after Thanksgiving.

Gary retired four years ago as a vice president with a national food company. The couple looked at newer retirement communities, including Sun City Grand, about 10 miles northwest of the original Sun City, and Sun City West, the community in between the two.

The Junsos had spent years visiting Gary's parents in Sun City and decided they wanted to live in the original community, citing its affordability. On top of the purchase price, the Junsos spent almost \$200,000 renovating the 2,650-square-foot house, which was built in 1978. They gutted the kitchen and master bathroom, tore down several walls to open up the house, enclosed the back patio and added custom doors and bookcases.

"We had been out there a number of times, and for us, given the difference in price, the (larger) size of the lots, we still feel that Sun City was a better value," Gary Junso said. "There is always a younger buyer for that house that turns over."

The Junsos have enticed friends to follow them to Sun City.

"Sun City sort of sells itself when people from South Dakota come to visit in the winter," Deanna said.

Prospective buyers can choose from apartments and two-bedroom houses of less than 1,000 square feet to roomy ranch-style homes that approach 3,000 square feet.

Jack Chalupka of Ken Meade Realty said the original Sun City's affordability is one of its big draws.

## AT MONEY .AZCENTRAL.COM

**Sun City houses:** View a slideshow showing the old — and the renovated.

**Video:** Residents talk about their lives in Sun City and the renovations under way.

## MARRIED, WIDOWED OR DIVORCED

The influx of newer and younger buyers has changed the ratio of Sun City's married population.

Almost 68 percent of all men in Sun City are married. Another 14 percent are divorced and 11 percent are widowed. About 50 percent of Sun City's female residents are married. Another 30 percent are widowed, and 15 percent are divorced.

The marriage rate is higher in Sun City West, with 76 percent of the men married. Only about 7 percent are divorced, and 12 percent are widowers. More women are married in Sun City West, about 60 percent of the residents. Another 27 percent of the women are widows, and 8.5 percent are divorced.

Besides replacing the existing windows to double-pane, those are the only major costs the Whites have incurred to keep up their four-bedroom home.

"We plan to live here until the end and leave the house to our children, and maybe they will want to retire here," Ed said. He and his wife play in Sun City bands and have practices and performances several times a week.

"There's a lot to do in Sun City. We didn't move here for the golf," he said.

## An original model

Sun City, now the pioneer in reinvention, always seemed on the leading edge of retirement issues. The night before developer Del E. Webb opened the community for home sales, he and a handful of his executives had dinner. It then dawned on one of his salesmen that they were going to have to try to sell homes with 30-year mortgages to people 55 and older.

In 1960, most retirees didn't expect to live past 75. Webb had already spent hundreds of thousands of dollars building the first model homes, streets and recreation center for Sun City.

The next day, Jan. 1, 1960, thousands of people showed up to see the modest block-wall homes with carports that sold for \$8,500 to \$11,750, \$600 more for air-conditioning.

The 30-year mortgages didn't turn out to be a problem. Webb sold 1,300 houses in the first year. The community was so revolutionary, *Time* magazine made Webb its "man of the year" in 1962.

Sun City wasn't the first age-restricted community in Arizona. Nearby Youngtown is older. But Webb's model created the new national template for retirement.

Although the houses lack the high-end finishes of newer properties in Sun City Grand, the original construction was solid, and the original design keeps down remodeling costs, builders said. Large beams carry the roof, so there are no load-bearing walls in the house and no major pipes within them. That makes it easy to open up rooms for Boomers who want an open-concept feel. The ceilings can go up another 2 feet without much problem.

Ed and Patricia White moved from Alabama to Sun City in 1987. Ed was still working full time as a minister at a nearby church. The couple's house was built in a later stage of Sun City and already had been partially renovated.

The couple just had the roof resingled for the second time.

### Changing interests

Sun City's eight golf courses did entice many of its early residents, but golf revenue is down for the community as fewer homeowners hit the links. This generation of residents has more varied recreational interests.

The community's improvement fund, started in 1999, pays for new amenities. Pickleball courts recently were added, and gyms were updated with new equipment during the past few years. Sun City has the money to keep evolving with \$13 million in the fund.

"Sun City periodically needs to reinvent itself, and does so as each new generation retires," said Joelyn Dinnella Higgins, spokeswoman for the Recreation Centers of Sun City Inc. "Sun City has always been and

will remain the best value in terms of cost per resident for the amount of amenities available."

Higgins can rattle off the selling points: seven recreation centers, eight golf courses, two bowling alleys, an outdoor amphitheater that sprawls over 9 acres, more than 120 chartered clubs and 33 acres of man-made lake.

Sun City residents pay about \$450 a year per property to use and maintain all the amenities.

The fees in Sun City West are \$408 and \$1,104 in Sun City Grand.

"Sun City was the first of its kind, and could be the last of its kind," said Anne Mariucci, past president of Pulte Del Webb and a real-estate expert. "Now most Baby Boomers want a different lifestyle when they slow down, and most aren't retiring to play golf."

However, those with a vested interest in existing policies can raise a ruckus, on issues from a proposal to raise recreation fees to a failed attempt to allow homes to sell to couples younger than 55.

"The big-C word in Sun City is not cancer; it's change," said Barry Spinka, a Sun City resident who has lived in the community for 11 years and is running for the recreation centers' board of directors.

## THE SUN CITIES

Del Webb's original three retirement communities differ significantly in median age and income.

	SUN CITY	SUN CITY WEST	SUN CITY GRAND
Opened	1960	1978	1996
Number of residences	27,492	16,500*	9,802
Median resident age, 2012	73	76	NA
Percentage married	67 percent of males, 49 percent of females	76 percent of males, 60 percent of females	69 percent of males, 61 percent of females
Median income, 2012	\$36,903	\$46,260	\$55,000
Median home price, 2013**	\$128,750	\$190,000	\$240,000***
Home price change, 2013	+7%	+9%	+15%

\* Estimated. \*\*Through Sept. 30. \*\*\* Based on data from ZIP codes 85374 and 85387. Because Sun City Grand is located in two different ZIP codes that also include non-Sun City Grand residents, demographic data is less easily obtained.

Sources: U.S. census; W.P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University; Arizona Republic Valley Home Values; Sun Cities

nix, Sun City has also drawn investors buying homes inexpensively and then remodeling them to flip for a profit.

Chalupka, the real-estate agent, said Sun City buyers now are "completely refurbishing and remantling."

John Smith is halfway through a renovation of a Sun City home, built in 1974, that he recently paid \$119,000 for. The interior, with the original white walls; the living room, with a wall of mirrors and the 8-foot ceiling; and the kitchen, with a wall-mounted oven and a trash compactor, hadn't been fixed up in 30 years.

Smith, 70, is a former school-teacher from Kansas and lives in Sun City with his wife, Sandy. This is the third Sun City house he has fixed up for resale. He hopes to make about \$50,000 profit on it.

About 700 homes are for sale in Sun City, with the most affordable priced at \$49,000. The most expensive house for sale in the retirement community is priced at \$450,000 and has four bedrooms, five bathrooms and looks as if it could be found in a high-end community in Scottsdale.

Mark Stapp, executive director of the Master of Real Estate Development program at Arizona State University's W.P. Carey School of Business, said Sun City must continue to draw enough new buyers. If owners can't keep up their houses, it won't be a place Baby Boomers will want to buy, he said.

Smith is convinced the same qualities that attracted him and his wife to Sun City will keep drawing people for decades, even as more-modern communities open.

"Affordability will keep it going," Smith said. "That and location. The northwest part of Phoenix is good for retired people. You're not fighting traffic. We have our own grocery store here and our own shopping."

Brown said he and other residents like Sun City because it's quiet and safe and fits their lifestyle.

"The sidewalks roll up in Sun City at 9 p.m. But that's OK because we do, too," he said.

Republic reporter Ronald J. Hansen contributed to this article.



Citing Sun City's affordability, Gary and Deanna Junso bought a \$200,000 home in 2011 and have spent almost \$200,000 more on renovations for the 2,650-square-foot house, which was built in 1978. PHOTOS BY STACIE SCOTT/THE REPUBLIC



Ed White and his wife, Patricia, moved to Sun City in 1987. They've made few changes to the home and plan to leave it to their kids.





Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-S

A casualty of last year's monsoon storm included this Sun City medical company car. Hundreds of trees in the Northwest Valley were downed by record winds a year ago today.

# Arizona history

## Storm of '96 made

### Wind wreaked \$160 million in damages

#### Staff report

A look on the World Wide Web will yield a particular report about the violent news of one year ago today: the vicious monsoon that tore through the Northwest Valley.

That storm, studied by the National Weather Service and filed into a five-page report on the Web, has been called "one of the most significant in Arizona history."

According to the report, which tallies the storm damage at an estimated \$160 million, wind speeds during the blast measured up to 115 mph, a record for Arizona gusts.

Of course, those who endured the storm don't need scientific equipment to report on the monsoon's terrible effect.

Marie Luciani of Sun City said she remembers the storm well.

She and her husband, Michael, were getting ready to play bocce at Marinette Recreation Center at about 6 p.m. last Aug. 14, when all the lights in their home went out.

"Of course we couldn't go, so we walked back into the living room," Luciani said. "We were looking out the window and about five minutes later, the solar panel on the neighbor's house, 40 feet or more long, just flew up over their house and landed right in my yard on my saguaro."

Meanwhile, the cushions on chairs on Luciani's front porch took flight, as the couple began to realize that the electricity was probably out everywhere.

"I felt, I would say, maybe a little nervous," she said. "I think you're kind of shocked and your thoughts aren't all with you at the time. The wind was so heavy. You are just sort of in shock, looking."

When the wind quieted down, the Lucianis ventured outside to inspect the damage.

"We saw the end of the solar panel sticking to the needles of our cactus," Luciani said. "The cactus survived, but I had to have it hacked, and I'm not too happy with the way it looks."

Luciani's homeowner's insurance didn't cover replacing the damaged saguaro cactus, considered a tree instead of a plant under the terms of her policy. And her neighbor's insurance wouldn't pay to replace it, either.

Luciani said her home and the home where the solar panels were installed were probably hit worst of all homes in the 10600 block of West Manzanita Drive in Sun City. A patio shade and an ocotillo cactus were also reported damaged on the block.

This year, Luciani is more prepared. When the power went out briefly during a recent storm, she hauled out the candles.

"I'll leave them out until we're through with the monsoon," she said, recalling the 12-hour outage last year. "I always keep out candles and flashlights."

Luciani remembers the aftermath of the storm clearly, as well.

► See Storm of, A5

# Storm of '96 surprised weather watchers

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**'To predict 115 mile-per-hour winds is probably beyond our capability.'**

**— Doug Green  
meteorologist  
National Weather Service**

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◀ From A1

"I had to clean up every single thing in the house," she said. "Even though everything was closed, I had to wash and clean everything. It took me a week to get everything clean."

Luciani wasn't the only one who had a mess to contend with.

"There was significant damage," said Don Johnston, fire chief with the Fire District of Sun City West. Johnston and firefighters from across the Sun Cities waded through the monsoon's deluge of rain and debris in the streets.

Most trouble for firefighters came from power outages, with crews rushing to Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital in Sun City West and using hoses and fire hydrants to power air conditioners, which had failed because of the storm, Johnston said.

He also observed a vast array of damage. "Roofs were blown off and we had a couple of aluminum patios that were relocated to other parts of town."

The storm cut a wide swath

through the Northwest Valley.

In Glendale, the Northwest Garden Apartments at 9350 N. 67th Ave. was one of the structures that was hardest hit, with damages totaling almost \$300,000.

About 24 units were shut down because of roof damage and an average of two to three apartments in several other buildings were damaged in the storm, apartment manager Esther Norman said.

Several families had to be accommodated for the evening. About 16 families were transferred to vacant units on the property and the assistant manager took a family into her own apartment. An elderly couple was put up in a hotel room because of a medical condition and other families were moved into a shelter.

To cope with the damage left after the storm's wrath, about 40 percent of the complex's residents gathered the following day to assist with the clean up.

"The residents all pulled together the next day. We had a clean-up party. There was

tile, debris and garbage everywhere and trees were down," Norman said.

Local businesses such as KFC and Domino's pizza donated food and beverages for added inspiration.

Since last year's storm, maintenance and management personnel at the complex now patrol the area for damage and try to correct it as it occurs, but Norman said preparation for that kind of event is pointless.

"At this point, I can't see anything we can do to prevent that from happening again — just pray," Norman said.

She said the complex lost only two families to other complexes after the storm.

Ironically, the storm that blew down trees and sent lawn chairs tumbling across golf courses came as something of a surprise to weather watchers, said a spokesman with the National Weather Service's Phoenix office.

"To predict 115 mile-per-hour winds is probably beyond our capability," said meteorologist Doug Green, who co-authored the monsoon report with Weather Service colleague Jesus A. Haro.

Still, officials had been tracking the storm, which built strength over Utah and hit Arizona during a period of record high temperatures, the report said.

At the same time, winds from the Gulf of California

led to a sharp increase in moisture across the state, it was reported. In short, conditions were ripe for a meteorological melee.

In the wake of the storm, the monsoon's power was obvious. In tallying the damage, the Weather Service counted hundreds of downed power poles and several railroad cars knocked over by the wind.

The storm knocked down trees and cactus, damaged roofs and air conditioning units, and even tipped two 720-ton pillars built to support a highway overpass.

According to the report, more than 250,000 homes lost power and telephone service. In surveying the damage, Gov. Fife Symington declared Northwest Phoenix a disaster area.

One person died as a result of the storm, after two automobiles crashed in an intersection where traffic lights had been blown out, the report said.

The damage was so great that when a similar storm tore through the Northwest

Valley two weeks later, nothing was left to knock down, said Green.

"It hit in the same place but everything was already damaged."

And while the National Weather Service called the storm "unusual," violent thunderstorms are not uncommon during Arizona's summer months, Green said.

Those caught by monsoons are urged to find shelter in sturdy buildings or even cars. Common sense notions should rule the day, the meteorologist said.

"Get off the phone and out of the bathtub," he said.

Johnston also advises people to avoid large glass windows, and most importantly to get away from wind and lightning.

But Arizona's flat expanses also give residents an advantage in stormy weather, Green said.

"There's good visibility in the Valley, so you can see these things coming," he said.

Staff writers RuthAnn Hogue, David Miller and Tina Schade contributed to this story.

# RISE OF A REGION

## THE STORY OF THE WEST VALLEY

Happy 100th birthday, Arizona! A century ago, roads and water brought the West Valley to life as it blossomed into a region with decades of development and hundreds of thousands of new residents, including many colorful characters. Here are some of the stories about the past 100 years.

**AZ**  
CENTENNIAL  
1912-2012

STORIES ABOUT  
WEST VALLEY'S  
PAST, PAGES 3-23



A 1940s photo depicts a crowd gathered outside Freewill Baptist Church, Surprise's first religious congregation.

SURPRISE  
HISTORICAL  
MUSEUM



Members of the El Mirage Volunteer Fire Department are shown in 1988: Hector Celaya, 22, Bal Vasquez, 38, Luis Soliz, 35, Ed Rios, 37, and Raynaldo Garcia, 31. THE REPUBLIC



In 1959, Del Webb began Sun City, the first "active adult retirement community" in the U.S. It opened Jan. 1, 1960, and 237 homes were sold the first weekend. THE REPUBLIC

# Road, water spur West Valley growth

## Region's development also linked to railroad

By Lesley Wright

The Republic | azcentral.com

The West Valley's development, still ongoing more than a century later, can be described by its roads and waterways.

Transportation routes — or the lack of them — would keep the Valley's west side blooming in cotton and citrus long after Phoenix and its eastern satellites merged into a metropolitan area.

Real growth would come with freeways and major arterial roads. And then it would boom into a region that still has decades of development and hundreds of thousands of new residents ahead of it. New roadways will merge with those built more than a century ago.

Before Grand Avenue was christened in 1888, it was Vulture Road, which allowed stagecoaches and the gold miners of Wickenburg to travel across the open land on a diagonal route that led to what would become Phoenix.

"We like to say that Wickenburg is the mother of Phoenix," said state historian Marshall Trimble, noting that two Wickenburgers actually founded Arizona's largest city.

There was not much reason for travelers to stop between the two.

"There was no water, there were no Indian ruins (canals) out here," said Edson Allen, a Sun City historian. "This was just part of the desert that people crossed."

That would change as the roads and canals were built.

Grand Avenue allowed Glendale to connect with Phoenix and become the West Valley's biggest city. Interstate 10 allowed Buckeye and Coldwater — now Avondale — to become more than stagecoach stops or little towns to service farmers. Bell Road would bring hordes of retirees, now nearly 90,000 strong — into the Sun Cities after World War II.

New freeways, such as Loop 101 and Loop 303, promise to bring more boom times to the outer rings of the West Valley within the next 100 years.

Before all that, there were stagecoach stops, farm towns and unending fields of citrus, cotton and other crops. As late as 1975, Allen recalls his newly retired parents picking him up at the Phoenix airport and taking Grand Avenue to Sun City. It was such a long journey, and so



Above: The Roveys were pioneer farmers in Arizona. This 1921 photo shows Albert Rovey and his 5 kids.

ROVEY DESCENDANTS



Left: Workers harvest watermelons on a farm in Avondale.

JACK KURTZ/  
THE REPUBLIC

frightening with its six-way intersections, that he has refused to drive on it ever since.

### Roads, water nourish Glendale

Grand Avenue was a critical link for William J. Murphy, the Civil War veteran who founded Glendale and Peoria. He built the road that gave access to Peoria, Wickenburg and other tiny towns along the way.

By 1895, the parallel railroad tracks along Grand connected Prescott to Phoenix and allowed West Valley commerce to develop.

Murphy also built the Arizona Canal bringing irrigation to the west side in 1885. Farther southwest, the Buckeye Canal was completed a year later. These projects were crucial infrastructure that had been lacking for centuries. Even the Hohokam Indians — who gave the east side of Phoenix a head start by building canals before the tribe disappeared by 1450 — did not try to farm the west.

William Henry Bartlett did farm it. He carved out Glendale's Sahuaro Ranch in the late 1800s to cultivate fruit for a national market. With Glendale's ice plant other farmers could sell their produce to a wider population. Water from the ca-

nals opened the land to farming and, eventually, to homes.

"That was a big era of hopes for what could be out here," said John Akers, Sahuaro Ranch historian.

Murphy and Bartlett both took advantage of the Desert Land Act of 1877, which provided 640 hot, dry acres to anyone willing to settle the area.

### Dams bring prosperity to west

Development became easier after 1911, when the Roosevelt Dam was completed. The Beardsley Dam followed in 1927. Before that, droughts and floods made farming somewhat perilous.

By 1917, the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. had bought vast acres to grow cotton for its tires. Company executives moved into Litchfield Park. But the cotton era ended around 1920, when wartime embargoes were lifted. Goodyear found ways to make tires without it. Still, populations increased. El Mirage was created as a home for migrant workers in 1937. Surprise began a year later, when Flora Mae Statler bought the original town site for 35 cents an acre.

She or her daughter is reported to have said something along the lines of, "I'd be surprised if this town ever amounted to much," thus giving the future city its name.

### World War II's end brings boom

World War II brought air fields around the West Valley and the greater Phoenix area, leading to the founding of Luke Air Force Base. Thunderbird Field would evolve into the Thunderbird School of Global Management, one of the world's top business schools.

The end of the war, with its baby boom, brought a push for more housing. Developer John F. Long started building Maryvale and pushed out to other communities. But one of the largest housing developments to grow in the West Valley would not house booming babies.

Youngtown was founded in 1954 as a community for people who were 55 or older. That concept brought skepticism from those who thought older people would never leave their extended families.

Developer Del E. Webb had his doubts, but studies in Florida convinced him that retirees would indeed abandon

See WEST VALLEY GROWTH, Page 4



Above: In 2006, the Grand Avenue underpass at Glendale Avenue between 56th and Myrtle Avenues was completed near City Hall. CARLOS CHAVEZ/THE REPUBLIC

Right: Thunderbird Field, an air base that trained U.S., Canadian, British and Chinese pilots in World War II, led to a highly regarded school of global management.

REPUBLIC ARCHIVE



### WEST VALLEY GROWTH

Continued from Page 3

families for warm climates, according to Sun City historian Allen.

When the new residents of Youngtown started complaining that their promised golf courses had never appeared, Webb took the master-planned retirement community to a new level.

The first weekend that Sun City opened for business in 1960, visitors bought 237 homes.

The community had a shopping center, a store, a recreation center with a pool, a hotel, guest apartments and one nine-hole golf course.

By the 1970s, the concept led to Sun City West and Sun City Grand would open in the late 1990s.

Today, the Sun City vision has been replicated worldwide.

### Universities, sports hub emerge

The latter half of the century saw amenities grow.

Residents fought for a state law in 1984 to build a west campus of Arizona State University.

The following decade, Midwestern University opened in Glendale and became the state's largest medical schools.

Glendale's Arrowhead Ranch set the

stage for high-end master-planned communities, followed by Goodyear's Estrella Ranch, Peoria's Vistancia, Surprise's Marley Park and Buckeye's Verrado.

Peoria landed the West Valley's first spring-training ballpark in 1994, and other professional sports weren't far behind.

The region boasts five spring-training facilities, professional football hockey and one of NASCAR's most popular tracks.

Residents who come to the West Valley for sporting events see the area growing, especially as local officials push for jobs and try to wean residents from a commuter mentality.

Massive new master-planned communities, stymied by the housing bust, still exist on paper in the West Valley's north and south ends, waiting for the economy to recover.

Malls are planned to go along with new freeways.

But motorists still drive alongside pockets of agriculture, the rose farms and watermelon fields.

Trimble said he does not try to predict the future, but he hopes the West Valley does not become wall-to-wall development.

"I do hope they preserve some of the land," he said.

"I just believe it's healthy, mentally."

## SUN CITIES HISTORY

**1959:** In July, the developer Del E. Webb begins building homes for a project called Sun City in a roughly 14-square-mile area between Peoria and El Mirage. It would be considered the first "active adult retirement community" in the country, known for amenities like recreation centers and golf courses for an age-restricted population.

**1960:** Sun City opens on Jan. 1, and 237 homes are sold the first weekend. More than 100,000 people came to Sun City that weekend to view the first five model homes, causing traffic jams on Grand Avenue. Age restrictions are put in place: At least one resident in each home must be 55 or older, and no children under 18 are allowed to live in Sun City.

**1978:** Sun City is built out. Sun City West is started.

**1989:** The non-profit Sun Cities Area Historical Society purchases one of the original Sun City model homes on Lot 1 to serve as its headquarters. Much of the home has been preserved in its original state, including the pink tiles in the kitchen and bathroom.

**1996:** Sun City West is complete and has residents from the 50 states, Canada and other countries. Del Webb begins construction of Sun City Grand, a similar age-restricted development, but it is incorporated into Surprise.

**2012:** Sun City and Sun City West, with a combined population of about 70,000 residents, remain unincorporated areas of Maricopa County. The original age restrictions remain in place.

*Sources: Del Webb Sun Cities Museum*



When Sun City opened on Jan. 1, 1960, more than 100,000 people came that first weekend to look at the five model homes. The turnout caused a traffic jam on Grand Avenue.

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



# Migrant workers came, stayed to help area grow

By **Dustin Gardiner**  
The Republic | [azcentral.com](http://azcentral.com)

When Margaret Leon Espinoza's family first moved to Surprise in the 1950s, the community was an agricultural blip on the map compared with other Phoenix suburbs that were beginning to bustle.

The primary occupation was cotton farming. There were no traffic lights until you hit Glendale. Virtually no one had air-conditioning (residents hung wet sheets around their porches to stay cool, hoping a breeze would blow the moisture).

Her father, Fidel Leon, was one of the many migrant farmers who found opportunity in Surprise and the far West Valley. A Mexican immigrant, he began working cotton fields in the area around the 1930s. He later saved enough to buy machinery and start his own farming operation.

Leon's entrepreneurial spirit persisted. In 1974, he opened one of the first recreational-vehicle courts in the area, Leon's Park West RV Park, to cater to

crowds of retirees flocking to nearby Sun City. The business flourished and the family ran it until they sold in 2005.

For Espinoza, vice president of the Surprise Historical Society, her father's story is just one of many that tell the role migrant farmers played in building the West Valley. They came to harvest crops and ended up laying down roots of their own.

"If he had a third-grade education, he was lucky," Espinoza said of her father. "He was a self-educated, persistent man. He helped establish the city."

Several of the region's cities, now booming with large populations and major sports venues, began with small groups of farmers who came to harvest cotton, citrus and vegetable crops. They often settled along waterways, such as the Agua Fria River, and were an early backbone of Surprise, El Mirage, Avondale and other communities.

Avondale Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers is the daughter of migrant workers and has spoken widely about how she grew up picking cotton and onions in the fields

where City Hall sits. In July, President Barack Obama recounted her story as an example of the "promise of America."

However, some have been critical of how predominately Latino neighborhoods founded by original migrant workers have fared as larger, more affluent subdivisions have sprung up around them. In both Surprise and El Mirage's original town sites, there are dilapidated buildings, many residents are low-income and some lament that they have been left behind.

Surprise Councilman Roy Villanueva, who began representing the city's old town area in 1978, has stressed the need for more revitalization efforts. He has advocated for the council to once again dedicate a portion of its property-tax revenue to old-town improvements.

Before the economic downturn, about 10 percent of property tax revenue was reinvested into the neighborhood through capital improvement projects, he said. New streetlights and street signage have been added in recent years, with help in the form of federal grants.



Migrant workers clip onions at a West Valley farm. Many workers came to the area farms and stayed to raise their families. THE REPUBLIC

# We must build on successes of past leaders

If you put pen to paper to create a timeline of growth in the West Valley over the past century, it could be broken down into a series of events: farming era ... the war era ... the home-building era ... the maturation era ...

It would be historically accurate, but left untold would be the stories of the people who breathed life into the ideas that bred progress for the West Valley and nurtured the area's soul.

To thrive, a community needs leaders willing to see what is not standing in front of them. These folks see potential in bright, vivid color, not a soft-focus dream. They contribute, collaborate, inspire and advocate.

While it's impossible to list all of the individuals who played a key role in the West Valley story, today we look at a few standout contributors.

1888: **William J. Murphy**, founder of Glendale and Peoria, helps create the first transportation link to downtown Phoenix, a diagonal trail that now is Grand Avenue.

1916: **Paul Litchfield**, a Goodyear Tire executive, comes to the Southwest Valley looking for a cotton source for the company's tires. He fell in love with the area and advocated for the region to become headquarters for Southwest Cotton Co. (later Goodyear Farms).

1938: Real-estate businesswoman **Flora Statler** sees potential in the far Northwest Valley, buying property and establishing the original town site of Surprise.

1941: Under the command of Lt. Col. **Ennis C. Whitehead**, Luke Field becomes a premiere training facility, graduating more than 12,000 fighter pilots during World War II.

1946: Lt. Gen. **Barton Yount** buys Glendale's Thunderbird Air Field to convert it into a business school focusing on foreign trade. Thunderbird is now world renowned.

1950: Tolleson resident **Porfirio Gonzales** leads a group of community members by signing a lawsuit that results in a landmark decision prohibiting Arizona schools



**Porfirio Gonzales**

State Sen. **Anne Lindeman** led the legislative effort to create Arizona State University West. Here, Lindeman, joined by Sweetwater Elementary students **Andrew Graham** and **Angela Kubiak**, take part in the inaugural ringing of the ASU West bell before the groundbreaking ceremony on Feb. 26, 1986. The bell was donated by Mr. and Mrs. **Herbert Bool** and the Arizona Historical Society. PETERS DIGITAL MIGRATION



from denying equal educational rights based on heritage or race.

1954: Homebuilder **John F. Long** launches Maryvale, one of the first master-planned communities in the nation, designed for World War II GIs and their families. A community steward until his death in 2008, Long was a philanthropist, a visionary, a city official, an entrepreneur and a statesman who contributed significantly to the West Valley.

1960: An innovator and established construction magnate, **Del E. Webb** opens Sun City in 1960, providing a comprehensive community with amenities designed for those entering their senior years.

1972: **Diane McCarthy** is elected to the Arizona House of Representatives representing the West Valley. She later is tapped to head Westmarc, a newly created coalition of the region's business, educational and government entities. Under her leadership, Westmarc gains a voice at the Capitol and West Valley officials collaborate to promote the area.

1975: Surprise Mayor **George Cumbe**, tired of the dirt roads in his city, paves almost all of 50 dusty roads himself at no cost to the city. He is cited in the "Congressional Record" as a role model for all mayors to roll up their sleeves and get the job done.

1981: **Adolfo Gamez** is elected to Tolleson City Council. Now mayor, Gamez has been a strong supporter of higher education opportunities, preserving Tolleson's community lifestyle and regional cooperation to promote the West Valley.

1984: **Anne Lindeman**, a steadfast advocate for the creation of a West Valley university, sees legislation that she introduced pass to create Arizona State University West.

1986: Theater Works is founded by **David Wo**, who believed the Northwest Valley needed and was ready to support a community theater. The thea-



**Anne Lindeman**

ter created extensive programming for children to expose them to the arts.

1990: Glendale Mayor **George Renner** leads efforts to establish Arrowhead Ranch, an upscale community that would change the face of north Glendale. The introduction of the master-planned community, regional shopping mall, custom home sites and country club spurs economic and population growth.

Midwestern University chooses to locate near Arrowhead Ranch, bringing the first medical school to the Valley.

1990: Litchfield Park

resident **Marcie Ellis** launches the West Valley Arts Council to provide arts opportunities, exposure and education throughout the region.



Marcie  
Ellis

2003: Judge **Elizabeth Finn**, a longtime champion for victims of domestic violence, becomes Glendale's presiding judge. She implements numerous domestic-violence programs in the city and leads efforts to train advocates and court officials throughout Arizona.

2003: Under the leadership of Mayor **Elaine Scruggs**, Glendale launches its sports and entertainment district with the opening of Jobing.com Arena for the Phoenix Coyotes, soon followed by Arizona Cardinals football and spring training for the Chicago White Sox and Los Angeles Dodgers.

2010: The daughter of migrant farm workers and now mayor of Avondale, **Marie Lopez Rogers** is elected to a leadership role for the National League of Cities. Serving on Avondale's council since 1996, Rogers began a monthly informal session of West Valley mayors to promote regional cooperation.

Visionaries, philanthropists, advocates, collaborators, innovators, doers — leaders.

They got us to this point. It's the responsibility of those here today and those who will follow to keep moving toward the West Valley's full potential during the next 100 years.

# A look back at 2012!



Clockwise, from below: RCSC's purchase of the dog park was the No. 2 story of the year. Others that did not make the list included, below center and left, the Sun City Fire District lost two members, Fire Marshal Ken Rice and Board Member Irvin Mitchell (center), to relocation and illness respectively; the Valley View Community Food Bank moved to Sun City; and artificial lawn bowl greens were installed at Fairway.



## Residents get more involved, vocal in community matters

**By Rusty Bradshaw**  
Independent Newspapers

Sun City residents became more involved and vocal in the operation of the community during 2012.

Through a variety of operational changes proposed by Recreation Centers of Sun City officials, residents spoke their piece often. The apex of residents' activity came in a packed auditorium meeting in November to discuss planned changes to the community's club policies. Residents also voiced their concerns on other issues, including gold tee times, solar energy projects a long range plan and purchase of a dog park.

These are just a few items that dominated the headlines during the year. Below are the top 10 news stories, as reported in the Sun City Independent, for the year.

**1** Recreation Centers of Sun City officials considered changes to RCSC's chartered clubs policy that some club leaders believe will have an adverse consequence for their groups.

Proposed changes include a \$2 per day charge for club guests and keeping a guest register to be submitted to RCSC officials monthly with guest fees. Another change defines special clubs as those that require non-RCSC cardholders to complete the group.

The Sun City Concert and Pops band members believe this change could cripple membership and be the demise of the groups. The con-

### Related Link:

[www.sunaz.com](http://www.sunaz.com)

cert band was established in 1979, and presently boasts 141 members, and the pops band formed in 1965, and features 100 members. The bands rely on membership from outside Sun City, and a large percentage of each band is non-Sun City residents.

However, if required to pay the guest fee, nearly all but two nonresident band members will leave the group, according to Ed White, band spokesman.

"If we have to have these rules, it will destroy the band," he said.

# Year

Continued From Page 1

During an Oct. 30 rehearsal meeting, he asked concert band nonresident members, with a show of hands, if they would leave the band if required to pay the guest fee. All nonresident members raised their hands.

Jan Ek, RCSC general manager, stated in an e-mail Policy 12 changes were introduced to provide equity for all RCSC guests. While the \$2 per day fee is part of it, there are other provisions in the proposal designed to provide equity, she added. In numerous clauses in the policy, both existing and proposed, it states RCSC cardholders should not be displaced.

RCSC officials brought forth a proposal in September to limit guests with facility privileges at members' homes to once per month to address that issue. But the motion was tabled for further study after residents protested during the September member/director exchange and board meeting.

## Update

In an attempt to compromise, RCSC officials offered musical groups the option of keeping the status quo, or dechartering, which would allow the clubs to use RCSC facilities rent free as long as they conducted four annual concerts with no admission charge and no donation solicitations of the audience.

Several group leaders said in a Dec. 10 RCSC member/director exchange meeting these options were not workable, and would still cripple the clubs.

**2** Duffee Land Dog Park was jam-packed Sept. 25 with the announcement the property will change hands.

The property, on the southwest corner of Del Webb and Thunderbird boulevards across from the La Ronde Shopping Center, is owned by Sun City resident Bob Knight. After buying the land in 2004, he fashioned it into use as a dog park and has privately maintained it since.

However, he hoped to sell the property, and keep it a dog park. He recently approached Recreation Centers of Sun City officials, who agreed to purchase the 1.6-acre strip of land for \$125,000, according to

Jan Ek, RCSC general manager. The transaction will not close until January to allow it and maintenance costs to be on the 2013 budget.

Mr. Knight thanked the nearly 50 residents at the announcement for their support of the park. He also said RCSC officials have discussed possible future improvements to the park, including parking lot paving, a grass area, water fountains for pets and their owners and others. However, nothing specific has yet been identified by RCSC officials, Ms. Ek said.

"Nothing specific has been discussed by the board, there are some requests, as you heard," she stated in an e-mail.

Mr. Knight had one special request of his own.

"I would hope they would keep the name of the park as Duffee Land," he said.

Duffee was the name of his dog when he created the park.

While final costs will depend on any park improvements, Ms. Ek estimated the monthly maintenance cost to RCSC for operating the park could range between \$750 and \$1,000.

Mr. Knight will continue to maintain the park until the purchase is complete, according to Ms. Ek.

**3** Recreation Centers of Sun City officials were tight-lipped concerning their research of options for Viewpoint Lake, despite a former board member asking about a suggestion he made.

The lack of information concerns some lake homeowners, who are interested in securing improved maintenance of the man-made lake and a solution to long-standing seepage.

"We've talked about putting a proactive group together," said resident Jerry Klaus. "But we don't see there is much we can do until we have something to react to."

Lake homeowners successfully sued RCSC to force the corporation to reverse a decision to increase fees for maintenance, an action that violated two agreements between RCSC and the lake association. Part of the judge's 2010 decision ordered RCSC officials to properly maintain the lake, including solving the seepage problem.

RCSC officials were relatively silent on lake issues when questioned by resident Don Schordje during a Sept. 29, 2011, board meeting. Mr. Schordje, a former RCSC board member, asked what was be-

## Related Link:

[www.azwater.gov](http://www.azwater.gov)

ing done about the lake leak.

"The only thing I can say right now is we are working on the problem," Vance Coleman, board president, said. "We will not try anything that has failed (previously)."

Then-board member Gene Westemeier did say officials were looking at relining the lake, and other options.

"We are working with the state and the county," he explained. "But right now it is in a state of flux, and if it gets out it could jeopardize our efforts."

Jan Ek, RCSC general manager, said going public at that time would present complications in reaching a desired resolution. She added RCSC's silence was not related to lake homeowners or the lawsuit filed by them.

Jon Braemer, a former RCSC board member, got the same stoney silence in the Jan. 16 RCSC director/member exchange when he asked about the status of his suggestion to declare the lake a recharge basin. He believes that option would eliminate the need to replace the lake liner.

"Sewage plants treat water then pump it into recharge basins where the water perks down into the soil," Mr. Braemer explained.

He originally made the suggestion shortly before he left the board in 2009.

Mr. Klaus said he spoke to Larry Klein, RCSC board member and lake resident, and was told the recharge basin was only one of several proposals being researched.

"When I talked to Jan Ek about it, she said I wouldn't have to worry about the lake," Mr. Klaus said. "That's somewhat comforting to hear, but without details it really doesn't put my mind at ease."

Nancy Mangone, the attorney who continues to represent homeowners, asked specific questions during a January lake association meeting, but got no answers, according to Mr. Klaus.

**4** The Recreation Centers of Sun City long range planning committee continued to prepare its recommendation to the RCSC Board of Directors for a long range plan spanning 15-20 years.

A preliminary report and recommendation was given to the board prior to the March 29 regular meeting, according to Larry Klein, committee chairman. He said

at the March 29 meeting, as part of his committee report, the board has started some discussion on the preliminary recommendation, but it is still in process.

Mr. Klein declined, through Tim Gallen, then-RCSC communications coordinator, an interview with the Independent to discuss the details of the preliminary recommendation. Mr. Gallen stated in an April 10 e-mail the board has not responded to the committee's report.

"(That) is why Larry wouldn't have anything to share at this time," he stated.

The committee has asked RCSC management for statistical data, Mr. Gallen added at the time.

"Committees make recommendations to the board and then the board will respond; there has been no response," Mr. Gallen stated.

Details of the preliminary report and recommendation were not revealed, but in 2011 the committee's discussions included renovation of Lakeview and Marinette, 9860 W. Union Hills Drive, recreations centers in similar manners as was accomplished at Fairway Recreation Center, 10600 W. Peoria Ave.

The RCSC board approved June 30, 2011, spending \$20,000 on site plans for Marinette and Lakeview. The RCSC long range planning committee would use site plans to develop recommendations to take to the board for center renovations. Committee members last year favored total rebuilds of the centers, according to Gene Westemeier, committee member who served as chairman in 2011.

"The buildings are approaching 50 years old," he said. "We can do Band-Aid renovations, but they are still nearly 50 years old."

## Update

The RCSC board approved in October the committee's recommended preservation and improvement fund budget, totaling \$28.3 million through 2020.

**5** Recreation Centers of Sun City officials worked with golfers to find a solution to tee time issues at its golf courses.

Golfers haggled for some time over whether to have straight sheet or crossover tee time assignments. In

# Year

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general, individual golfers prefer the straight sheets, while groups, such as the various golf clubs, prefer the crossover. During the summer months this year, RCSC officials established straight sheets at one golf course each day based on a published schedule.

However, golfing groups were not happy with the arrangement of the straight sheet tee times, and voiced their disapproval Sept. 17 during the first member/director exchange since June.

"Most members of large groups overwhelmingly are in favor of the cross-overs," said Debbie Williams.

Straight sheet begins each group playing 18 holes on the first hole, explained Brian Duthu, RCSC Golf manager. The tee times are concurrent, with no interruption throughout the day. Tee times alternate between 7- and 8-minute intervals, he added.

Crossover sheets begin with groups on holes No. 1 and No. 10, with tee times available in a 2-hour block, according to Mr. Duthu. At the end of two hours, the groups that started on hole No. 1 go to hole No. 10 and the groups that started on hole No. 10 go to hole No. 1, Mr. Duthu said. This "crossover" period lasts for two hours and 15 minutes, allowing time for all the groups to turn. After all groups have turned, another 2-hour block of tee times begins and the process repeats. Tee times alternate between 7- and 8-minute intervals on both sides.

Straight sheets slow down play, according to Rhonda Dunkel. It also delays getting all members of a large playing group on the course, which in turn does not allow them to finish closely together.

"Under straight sheets, it takes about an hour to get all members of an average-size group onto the course," Mr. Duthu said. "With the cross-over, that same group would all be on the course in about 30 minutes."

While large group representatives spoke out at the September exchange meeting, golfers who supported straight sheets were also heard.

"I love the straight sheets because you don't have to wait," said Linda Hall.

She added that with all crossover tee times, golfers have to find out which cours-

## Related Link:

[www.mcdot.maricopa.gov](http://www.mcdot.maricopa.gov)

es groups are playing on before they decide where to play if they want to avoid the wait.

**6** Sun City will get a new traffic signal to help ease congestion near the Fry's grocery store and Oakmont Recreation Center.

Maricopa County Department of Transportation is expected to start construction in late spring 2013 to install the traffic light at 107th Avenue and Oakmont Drive. The signal will be part of modifying the intersection for the west entrance to the grocery store parking lot, according to Roberta Crowe, MCDOT spokeswoman.

"The changes are being made to improve safety, ease congestion and improve traffic flow," she said.

Median cut-throughs directly north and south of the intersection will be eliminated and all left turns will be made at the 107th Avenue and Oakmont Drive intersection, Ms. Crowe explained. While the east side is the store entry, west of 107th Avenue is Oakmont Drive. The continuation of Oakmont Drive eastward begins behind the Fry's store.

The project originated from a traffic study and site visits, specifically to address left-turn movements, according to Ms. Crowe. The modifications, including the traffic signal, are expected to cost \$326,000.

The modifications were advocated by the Sun City Home Owners Association transportation committee.

"These changes will make this a safer block," said Jim Powell, committee chairman.

## Update

SCHOA officials expressed concerns over the initial designs for the traffic revisions during its November meeting.

**7** Solar energy panels will be popping up at recreation centers and some golf courses in Sun City, but not all residents are pleased about it.

Recreation Centers of Sun City

officials plan to install a 2.2 megawatt photovoltaic solar project, which is expected to generate about 4 million kilowatts per hour annually. The systems will be installed at all seven recreation centers, Bell Lanes, Lakeview Lanes and some golf maintenance facilities. The system will include an estimated 14,000 solar panels and produce the same amount of energy it takes to power 347 homes. RCSC officials project a \$1.8 million energy cost savings when the system is in place.

However, resident George Loegering, echoing other residents' concerns, is skeptical because no details of the plan were brought to residents for public discussion before a decision was made.

"I have not seen any planning, discussion or proposal for this plan," he said.

Mr. Loegering also questions the validity of the savings and prefers RCSC officials implement the program on a smaller scale trial basis to determine if the savings are possible.

RCSC officials counter the project plans could not be made public because of the competitive nature of the project.

"The RCSC Board of Directors was unable to make this public until last week (February 2012) because RCSC was required to make bids for the APS incentive blind auction and since that is a very competitive process, it was vital that it be kept quiet that Sun City was even considering a large amount of solar," Tim Gallen, then-RCSC spokesman, stated in a press release.

Other Sun City residents are excited about the solar project. Several praised the board during member/director exchange meetings since the project was announced. Gordon Rosier, in a Feb. 15 letter to the editor, stated he was pleased RCSC officials had followed his recommendation to install solar panels at all recreation centers.

In a second press release, RCSC officials explained there would be no cost to the corporation for installation and RCSC would be responsible for maintenance of the equipment after installation.

## Update

Solar energy projects at Recreation Centers of Sun City facilities are well on their way to completion, while RCSC officials continue to wait for permits for other projects.

The two Bell thermal pool-heating so-

lar projects were nearly 80 percent complete by the end of November. Pumps and associated plumbing were the last items to complete before testing. At Oakmont, crews were completing preparations for the ground mount panels, fencing was being fabricated and equipment purchased.

Priceless Plumbing is the contractor for the thermal projects.

RCSC officials continued to wait at the beginning of December for permits from Maricopa County Planning and Development for the photo voltaic electricity-producing projects.

**8** The Sun City Recreation Center Board of Directors considered a bylaw change eliminating some membership meetings and proxy votes.

The board will also consider a proposed long range plan for the corpora-

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tion's preservation and improvement fund, designated for capital improvements projects.

The bylaw change, if approved as proposed, would eliminate three quarterly membership meetings and retain the January meeting as the required annual meeting. In addition, the change would eliminate members' ability to vote at membership meetings without being in attendance through proxies.

The proposals did not sit well with some residents. Michael Brock believes the board is taking away opportunities for cardholders to be part of the governing process. Anne Randall Stewart agrees.

"They are trying to deny us the opportunity to have a voice," she said.

However, RCSC officials believe the changes will streamline the process and allow for more Participation.

"We are trying to make things more user-friendly," board member Bill Pearson said of eliminating three quarterly meetings. "First and foremost, the goal is to get a lot of people in that auditorium (for the annual meeting)."

## Related Links:

[www.mcso.org](http://www.mcso.org)

[www.peoriaaz.gov/police](http://www.peoriaaz.gov/police)

Jan Ek, RCSC general manager, said doing away with the proxy votes is an attempt to bring RCSC into compliance with Arizona Revised Statutes Title 33. She acknowledged RCSC does not operate under Title 33, rather it is governed by Title 10.

"While RCSC is not required to comply with Title 33 by law, there are several things that RCSC does voluntarily that are in compliance with Title 33, as does Sun City West," she stated in an Oct. 15 e-mail. "As you know, we are frequently asked to comply with Title 33."

Ms. Ek also told residents at the Oct. 15 member/director exchange meeting that in the six years she had been with RCSC, not one proxy was filed.

## Update

The RCSC board approved the bylaw change eliminating three of the quarterly membership meetings and proxy voting.

**9** An elderly man was killed in the Bell Camino Shopping Center parking lot in Sun City when he was struck by a car as he was leav-

ing a store.

James Cleghorn, 69, died June 27 in the early morning accident. He was struck by a car driven by Karen Petty, 70, as he left the CVS Pharmacy shortly after 8 a.m., according to Sgt. Brandon Jones, MCSO deputy.

Ms. Petty was attempting to park in a handicapped slot in front of the store when she inadvertently pressed the gas pedal instead of the brake. The car jumped the curb and slid sideways.

Ms. Petty's vehicle knocked Mr. Cleghorn to the pavement then ran over him before striking a parked car and a pillar outside the store, according to Sgt. Jones.

It appeared the victim died instantly. Bystanders, who did not witness the accident itself, said an ambulance had been on the scene earlier but left without taking the victim's body, which lay on the pavement under cover.

**10** A two-car collision on Thunderbird Road at 91st Avenue killed one person Sept. 6.

According to Amanda Jacinto, Peoria police spokeswoman, the accident occurred about 11 a.m. when a white Hummer H3 struck a green Hyundai station wagon. The Hummer was traveling eastbound on Thunderbird Road and making a left turn

onto 91st Avenue when the crash happened. The Hyundai was traveling westbound on Thunderbird Road.

The driver of the Hummer was the only person in that vehicle. There were three people in the Hyundai. A woman in the front passenger seat was partially ejected from the car. She suffered life-threatening injuries. All three people in the Hyundai and the Hummer driver were transported to area hospitals. The woman who was partially ejected later died of her injuries.

Police had not released the names of those involved. However, the Hummer was registered to a Sun City address and the Hyundai was registered to a Phoenix address.

The accident blocked westbound traffic on Thunderbird and all traffic on 91st initially. Later eastbound and westbound traffic on Thunderbird was limited to a single lane before the scene was cleared. Traffic on 91st Avenue was restricted from crossing Thunderbird until the area was cleared of debris.

**NW VALLEY NEWS****SUN CITIES****Sun City history book available**

Arcadia Publishing recently published "Sun City" as part of its "Images of America" series. The book provides a pictorial history, culled from the Sun Cities Historical Society archives, of the nation's first active-adult retirement community. It details history from pre-Sun City days to its golden anniversary celebration in 2010.

2-11-11  
**BRIEFS**

The project was coordinated by author Bret McKeand. The book is available at area bookstores, independent and online retailers or from Arcadia Publishing by calling 888-313-2665.



# West Valley coming full circle in growth

By Carrie Watters

THE REPUBLIC | AZCENTRAL.COM

The West Valley has grown so fast in recent decades that many who read this can count on one hand the years they've lived here.

That growth is a dynamic that bodes well for the region's future prosperity.

But for natives, the transformation of the West Valley is mind-boggling.

Sherry Ann Aguilar grew up in Surprise and remembers seeing a cattle ranch where the orange-hued roofs of Sun City West now paint the horizon. And she's just 50.

As a teenager in the 1970s, Aguilar's hometown was an outpost of fewer than 3,000 people.

Now-booming Peoria was a scant 5,000 residents.

It was Glendale, the entry point to the West Valley, that boomed during this time — a harbinger of what would spread west.

By the time Ronald Reagan was elected in 1980, Glendale's population had nearly tripled to 97,000 residents.

John Akers, raised in Glendale during that period, always bristled at the toss-away term "bedroom community" that belittled his city. In small ways, the teen-



MICHAEL SCHENNUM/THE REPUBLIC

Development in the West Valley still coexists with farmland. Rooftops spring up even as fields still color the landscape.

ger could see that Glendale was far beyond a non-descript suburb of sameness. A few signs that were written in English and Russian still hung around the city, a literal marker of the diversity that has shaped the region.

But amid change, it can be tough to hang on to heritage. Akers now spends his time as a historian at Glendale's Sahuaro Ranch Park, sharing what he has discovered about the region's "proud farming heritage."

And in many ways, he sees the West Valley coming full circle, seeking to re-emerge as the self-sustaining region of its past.

Farmers began to dot the West Valley in the late 1880s, when Maricopa County had all of about 10,000 residents.

The West Valley, because of less efficient modes of transportation, was largely independent of Phoenix around the turn of the century. Glendale, with its ice plant and rail lines, became a hub. Farther out, Buckeye anchored settlers near the Gila River.

That growth had come after Congress, in 1877, passed the Desert Land Act, which would provide 640 acres to those

who wanted to settle the hot, dry area.

Canals to irrigate the desert were a top priority, as were transportation routes.

The Arizona Canal was completed in 1885.

A year later, the Buckeye Canal, named for the developer's home state of Ohio, was completed.

A Civil War veteran, William J. Murphy, created the Arizona Improvement Company in 1887 and bought land in areas that would eventually be called Peoria and Glendale.

Like other land speculators, Murphy focused on laying out the necessities that would attract settlers.

Grand Avenue, which even today is a gem for driving into Phoenix, was completed in 1888. The railroad track that runs parallel to Grand was laid soon after.

As Glendale grew, other areas were developing as well. Avondale, originally called Coldwater, was a stagecoach stop for travelers between Tucson and Wickenburg, which had sprouted three decades earlier when gold was found.

Tolleson, which would be founded in

1910, had earlier been a stagecoach stop on the road to Yuma.

Those early years weren't easy.

The Arizona Canal drew water directly from the Salt River, which subjected farmers to flood and droughts.

The completion of the Roosevelt Dam in 1911 stabilized things.

And so, the area grew.

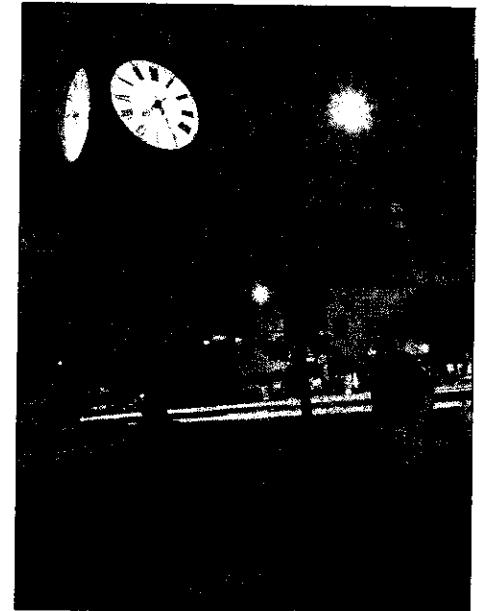
Cotton became king leading up to World War I as it was used for airplane tires and other items.

The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company purchased land in 1917 to grow cotton in what would eventually be called Goodyear. Today's Wigwam Golf Resort & Spa was built in what would become Litchfield Park as a hotspot for the company's executives.

When the British government embargoed cotton from Egypt, Valley farmers grew cotton wherever they could till soil.

When wartime embargoes were lifted, the cotton boom came to a crashing halt in 1920, bankrupting many farmers.

See **HISTORY** Page 5



DAVID WALLACE/THE REPUBLIC

People like John Akers, coordinator of historic education and outreach at the Sahuaro Ranch Park Historic Area, is excited about the region's heritage.

**HISTORY**

*Continued from Page 4*

In 1930, the U.S. census counted 3,665 residents in Glendale. Buckeye had 1,077.

By 1937, El Mirage was founded with homes for migrant workers. Surprise came a year later. Neither would be incorporated for another 20 years.

In World War II, the government built air fields around the West Valley and greater Phoenix area.

These military fields eventually would become places such as the Goodyear Airport and the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Glendale.

Luke Air Force Base, the world's largest F-16 fighter jet training base, is the lingering symbol of that past and still provides a tremendous economic boost to the West Valley.

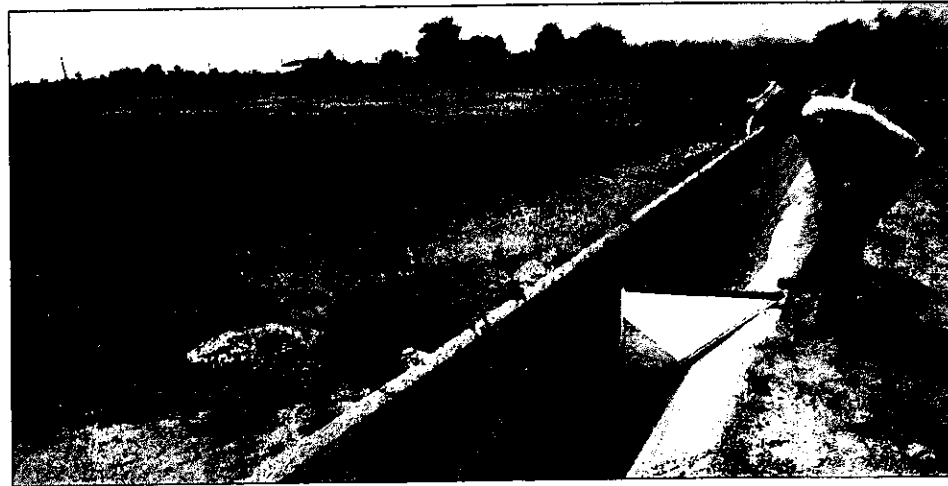
Perhaps through the experience of striking deals with the military, Phoenix and East Valley leaders began to look to industrialization in the 1940s, according to Philip VanderMeer, a history professor at Arizona State University.

The West Valley clung to its agricultural roots.

That decision, or lack of interest in diversifying, is still felt today as commuter patterns for residents largely head east.

Into the 1960s, Phoenix and the East Valley's push for industry and tourism had taken off with resorts and an active Cactus League, the spring-training league that continues to grow.

That's not to say the West Valley had no diversification or tourism. Wickenburg had its dude ranches. Del Webb on New Year's Day 1960 had 100,000 people



MICHAEL CHOW/THE REPUBLIC

The Roosevelt Dam helped secure the West Valley against drought.

show up to see the Sun City retirement community he built out of cotton fields. Clearly, a community that offered homes and recreational amenities for retirees was a hit.

But the East Valley's jumpstart on development, it can be argued, was laid centuries before.

The Hohokam Indians, in the area until about 1450, had built miles of canals across the Valley. When Anglo settlers came to the area 400 years later, they revived those canals in the central and East Valley, VanderMeer said.

"To some extent that's a head start," he said.

Valley highways, which also ushered in development, followed the population and were slower in moving west.

But Arizona's population growth eventually spread into the West Valley.

Developer John F. Long, a giant among West Valley leaders, fervently lobbied for recreation and amenities in the West Valley to accompany its population surge.

Others waged a political battle that led to a state law to establish Arizona State University's West campus. The school on the Phoenix-Glendale border opened in 1984 and continues to grow.

And the area got highways.

By the late 1970s and into the 1980s, Interstate 10 stretched into the West Valley. Loop 101 followed in the 1990s — opening the area to an explosion of growth.

Here's a look at some U.S. census population figures from 1990 to 2008.

» Avondale — 16,169 to 81,299.

» Buckeye — 5,038 to 47,261.

» Glendale — 148,134 to 251,522.

» Goodyear — 6,258 to 59,508.

» Peoria — 50,618 to 157,960.

» Surprise — 7,122 to 92,897.

The growth brought greater housing diversity and amenities.

Arrowhead Ranch, in northern Glendale, took off in the 1990s and became the region's first large and high-end master-planned community. Others also came: Goodyear's Estrella Ranch, Peoria's Vistancia and Buckeye's Verrado.

The Cactus League spread west into Peoria in the 1990s and has multiplied to five stadiums.

More recently, the region became home to the NFL Arizona Cardinals' stadium, which has to some extent helped residents outside the West Valley to look at the region in a new light.

In the full circle of development, today's West Valley leaders face the challenges of the original founders. They must ensure adequate water, infrastructure and work for a diverse economy that provides quality jobs for the people who now call the region home.

The West Valley still is a place where acres of colorful flowers are grown, where one can see a tractor chugging down a road beside rows of subdivisions and where trucks heaped with watermelons can be spotted each spring.

But there's also a more diverse economy springing up in areas such as north Peoria, the job centers proposed near Glendale's sports district and stretching out along Interstate 10, said Jack Lundsford, who heads Westmarc, a coalition of West Valley cities and businesses formed in 1992.

"We have in the West Valley almost all of the components for the great society," he said.

## From A1

doubling the space of the fitness area, renovating the existing pool and deck, a new floor exercise room, upgraded air conditioning and a new walking pool.

After a year of planning, screening architects, taking public comments and reviewing bids, the RCSC board approved the Bell project and projected a cost of \$3.5 million in the 2005 RCSC capital budget, said Bud Hantke, RCSC treasurer.

Renovations are being proposed for Fairway Recreation Center in the near future and in long-term goals, other aging facilities will be renovated.

With the one-time capital preservation fee charged on each new home purchase, Dickson said the RCSC is financially equipped to make the necessary improvements.

## New generation

Baby Boomers are retiring and Sun City must stand out among hundreds of 55 and older communities across the nation.

"This is not the Sun City of your parents any longer. We need to be able to make the changes to evolve for the future," Herrmann said, noting that remodeling recreation centers and modernizing activities are part of the answer to freshen up Sun City's national image.

Corcoran realizes the Baby Boomers are already making waves in Sun City with Southwestern style homes, sophisticated shopping patterns and continuing careers.

"Businesses need to get built up here in town," he said. "I think individuals could continue to work here, but I know it's tough."

In order to maintain Sun

City as the City of Volunteers, new residents must embrace the volunteer spirit, Dickson said. Otherwise, the community may not live up to Del Webb's intention. This year especially, local organizations have seen a decrease in volunteer numbers. Dickson worries that statistics which point to younger generations being less like to volunteer are true.

"We're not set up to pay people to do what volunteers do to make this whole thing run," Dickson said. "To make Sun City work, we've got to keep a continuous force of informed volunteers. That may be the Achilles' heel in the future — keeping people volunteering."

## On the home front

Though Baby Boomers have been pegged as the reason for a boom in Sun City's home sales, Steve Meade, president of Ken Meade Realty, said there are other factors contributing to the hot market.

For at least two decades, there have been those under 55 buying homes here because they hope to retire in Sun City, Meade said. Before they reach retirement age, consumers see the prices creeping up and they're motivated to take action, buy a home and hold on to it until they're ready to move in, he said, adding that during this time, they may choose to renovate, rent it out or simply keep it waiting for them.

"When the first Boomer turned 55, it wasn't like there was a huge influx, it's been building," Meade said. "But it is an accelerated trend."

One contributing factor to why Sun City homes don't have the "For Sale" sign up for long is Sun

City's proximity to non-age restrictive cities.

"Families can be closer now. It stands to reason that if you had your grandkids living in Surprise or Peoria or Glendale, this becomes a strong consideration, more so than back when Sun City was much more a stand-alone community than it is now," Meade said.

Investment buying, remodeling and renovating Del Webb's older homes is also a growing trend, one that can increase property value and can prove to be a lucrative move, Meade said. There's always room for renovating in the Sun City market, he said.

"Homes do appeal to those who are looking for renovating that's already been done," he said, adding that retirees often look for the open floor plans that have become popular renovation features. "But, that market can only be as large as the demand for those projects."

Exteriors have also been changing, as many Sun City homeowners are mimicking newer homes' stucco and Southwestern appeal.

"The two biggest types of homes that seem to move the fastest are brand new homes or old homes they can renovate," Corcoran said. "I think it's wonderful. You not only increase your property, but it's a nicer and newer home."

## Sun Health, Boswell

Always striving to be on the cutting edge of health care, Sun Health and Boswell Memorial Hospital will continue to place Sun Citians in the best hands by expanding their facilities, staff and clinical programs.

According to Keith Dines, executive vice president of strategic development for Sun Health, Boswell has seen a 40 percent increase in admissions over the last

five years. During this time, Sun Health as a whole has experienced an 80 percent increase.

Answering to the growth, Sun Health is in the process of completing a long-term master facility plan that will address the specific health-care needs of Boswell in terms of growth, needs and technology, Dines said. The goal is to complete the plans by spring 2005 and complete the development by 2013.

Plans include more rooms for patients, increased availability of the most current technologies and additional physicians.

"We don't want to be reactive, but proactive in meeting the community's health-care needs," Dines said, adding that during the last 18 months, Sun Health recruited 30 physicians to the community. Sun Health continues to recruit additional physicians to neurosurgery, orthopedic surgery, general surgery, primary care and cardiology.

The Sun Health boards recently approved a \$5 million capital campaign to fund the construction and equipment needed for an expansion of the Sun Health Research Institute, said Pamela Meyerhoffer, Sun Health Foundation CEO.

The expansion will be a three-story building similar to the current building that scientists and researchers have outgrown. Directly next door to the existing institute, the new building will help expand the brain bank to include other kinds of tissue study and become a full tissue bank for local and nationwide research. There will be advancements to centers for oncology, orthopedics, ophthalmology and other areas of study, Meyerhoffer said. Construction should be complete by the end of 2006, she added.

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# Oldest retirement community keeping up with the Boomers

ANNIE BOON  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The once seemingly distant desert oasis of Sun City is keeping in step with the tremendous growth of the West Valley by answering to the changing needs of a changing population.

"Trying to keep Sun City active and up-to-date is kind of like changing the wheel on a moving car. You can't stop to do it, but have to do it while moving," said Norm Dickson, vice president of the Recreation Centers of Sun City board of directors and chairman of the long-range planning committee.

Started in 1960, this Del Webb Community is considered built-out, meaning there are no expanses of land on which to develop homes or mega-malls.

However, Sun City has never stopped evolving, Dickson said, and the community will continue to transform itself from within as times and people change.

As the West Valley braces for even more growth, Jim Corcoran, president of the Sun City Home Owners Association, expects the three Sun Cities to tighten their bonds.

"I certainly would like to see all of the Sun Cities remain tied together," Corcoran said. "We're all developments put together by Del Webb, and though we run our

organization and they run theirs, we need to work together through this."

Paul Herrmann, director of the Sun City Visitors Center, believes the next five to 10 years will see a stronger Sun City.

"All the growth that will go on is going to continue to help us bring visitors and potential owners to the area," Herrmann said, adding that the proximity of stadiums, malls and developments in the West Valley contribute to the attractiveness of Sun City. "These things continue to point to a strong economic position. As everything thrives around it, Sun City will hold its own."

Local leaders estimate that over the next decade, Sun City must provide what the new generation of retirees are expecting by updating its amenities and activities. The trend in home renovation is expected to pick up steam as the demand for newer homes increases.

## Clubs and activities

During the coming years, the Visitors Center hopes to be on the forefront of researching what today's and future retirees seek when it comes to activities.

For example, Sun City currently has a Travelogue club in which members watch movies of various destinations. In the near future with younger and more adventurous retirees, Herrmann

believes Sun City has approached the point when an actual travel club could be formed by members who want to take trips around the world together.

The Visitors Centers' long-range planning committee hopes to begin researching what other retirement communities around the country are doing in terms of clubs and activities.

"We want to ask what's drawing people to their community," Herrmann said. "We'll get to a point where, possibly, some of the clubs we have aren't what people are looking for any longer. This is why the research needs to be done."

According to social predictions, retirees are seeking to be more physically and mentally active, Dickson said. To that end, he said, recreation and fitness facilities are slated for remodeling and ASU West's Life Long Learning program is being implemented.

An example of changing times, he said, is the computer club with 2,000 members. Currently, classes are geared toward beginners and intermediate computer users, Dickson said. Soon, he expects the Baby Boomers, who have grown alongside computer technology, will seek accelerated and specialized computer classes.

"You have to deal with the needs of the people here now, the needs of those

who just moved in and the future residents," Dickson said. "There's no formula, no plan, no book we can read. Whoever the directors are in the future are going to have to understand the population they have and flex to it."

## New, improved amenities

With seven recreation centers, Sun City has the most amenities of any active retirement community in the nation. However, it's also the oldest such community and the deterioration of recreation facilities has become a reality.

But the Recreation Centers board is taking action.

Golf courses have water wells that are up to 50 years old, recreation centers are 28 to 44 years old and most fitness centers are far from state-of-the-art. As the RCSC learned since the upgrading of Sundial Recreation Center's fitness area — if you build it, they will come.

Sundial fitness center use has risen substantially since the facility improvements.

Renovations to Bell Recreation Center are approved and under way. The plans include new locker room facilities,

**See SUN CITY, A4**



The owner of this remodeled home in Sun City gave it a Southwestern flavor.

STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

DYER

DAILY NEWS-SUN

SATURDAY, NOV. 13, AND SUNDAY, NOV. 14, 2004

# Sun City remains Mecca for retirees

BETH DeFALCO  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SUN CITY — There were no guarantees for developer Del E. Webb in 1960, when he built Sun City — the West's pioneering master-planned retirement community — and invited retirees in the Snow Belt to trade their snow shovels for shuffleboards and sunshine.

But he built it. And the seniors came — and came, and came.

Nearly 45 years later, the community that started in remote cotton fields west of Phoenix has grown to 45,000 people and has spawned a crop of similar spin-offs for "active adults" 55 and older.

Developers have turned retiring here into a lifestyle that is attracting more seniors and is further solidifying Arizona's image as a retirement Mecca at a time when Western states are getting older at a faster rate than other parts of the country.

According to census reports, the over-65 population in Arizona grew by 7 percent — more than twice the national average — from 2000 to 2003.

Arizona ranked behind only Nevada (14.6 percent) and Alaska (13.7 percent) during that same period. Since 1990, the over-65 population has nearly doubled in Arizona.

"Before it was built, no one ever thought anyone would live out here because it was too far away," said Sun City resident Sam Femia, who was in his 20s and living in nearby Glendale when the development opened.

But on opening day, Jan. 1, 1960, miles of cars lined Grand Avenue leading into the development. According to the Sun Cities Area Historical Society, 237 home contracts were signed during the first 72 hours.

The cheapest model went for \$8,500. Air conditioning cost an extra \$600 and a home on a golf course ran another \$1,200.

There was a grocery store and recreation center. There was shuffleboard and lawn bowling, as well as golf. For a while, there was even a trolley — the "Shop Lifter" — to zip residents to the grocery

store a few blocks away.

"This is what sold it: Everything is here," said former New Yorker Jane Freeman, 84, one of the historical society founders and a Sun City resident since 1970.

Today, there's more of everything in Sun City.

The one recreation center has become seven. There are eight public golf courses and another three at private country clubs.

The trolley quickly gave way to golf cars as people realized it was easier to get around in them. For some, the golf car is their sole means of transportation.

Sun City had its own art museum and symphony, which are now regional, and more than 2,000 residents are involved with the community's computer club.

It remains unincorporated and self-governed. And although there's no police department, crime remains low; residents banded together to form a sheriff's posse and a neighborhood patrol.

"Me and my wife still have no problems walking around at night," said Femia, 70, who moved into the community with his wife a decade ago after their children left home.

Experts say the influx of seniors into this development and other areas has had a dramatic impact on the state.

Tracy Clark, an economist with the Bank One Economic Outlook Center at Arizona State University, said most retirees who move to Arizona have a lot of accumulated assets but not a lot of steady income. That makes Arizona's low cost of living attractive.

"That's one of the reasons Phoenix has a presence in the securities market in terms of the number of regional headquarters here," Clark said. "And seniors can dictate the type of businesses that locate in an area."

That's evidenced by the health-care network built around Sun City. Ten years after Sun City got its start, Sun Health opened the Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital here. The community is now served by an expansive health-care network, both nearby and around the state.



FILE PHOTO

Between Jan. 1 and Jan. 3, 1960, 237 home contracts were signed as people showed up to buy land in Sun City, the retirement community developed by Del E. Webb. Nearly 45 years later 45,000 retirees call Sun City home.

"They were the driving force for getting health-care services in their own backyard," said Jim McAllister, a spokesman for Sun Health. "It was built for the retirement community."

In 1987, the Mayo Clinic put a new branch — its third — in the Phoenix area. About 45 percent of patients at Mayo are older than 65.

The health-care benefit has been mutual. Seniors give back to their health-care providers through annual donations, leaving behind large sums when they die, volunteering and donating their bodies to science.

Sun City also has led the way for other retirement spreads and the concept of self-contained community living. It also has its own progeny. In Arizona, there's now Sun City West and Sun City Grand. Del Webb will break ground on Sun City Festival next year.

The developer has also opened Sun Cities in California, Nevada, Texas, Illinois and South Carolina.

Compared to its newer counterparts, the original Sun City is a relic. Homes in the new developments are wired for high-speed Internet and often have a separate "casita" on the property to be used as a guest room or home office.

Residents also don't meet for shuffleboard and bridge games so much anymore. At Del Webb's new developments, residents go to the fitness center to see their trainer and nutritionist, or attend accredited college courses offered on site.

"It tends to be more resort-like," said Catherine Barton, 54, who moved from Mississippi to Sun City Grand.

"I feel safe here and it's clean and attractive," she said. "And I love the new homes. They're so easy to maintain."

Like her neighbors, Barton said she and her husband checked out communities in Florida and California.

"I wasn't slick enough for California," she said. "I like the people here. I like their values."

# Those were the days

## Local PBS affiliate looks at the creation of Sun City in "Arizona Memories from the '60s"

JOHN GUZZON  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

With the passage of time comes memories, mainly of the defining moments of one's existence.

Since the end of World War II and the boys coming home, most of the defining moments in Arizona history have been tied with growth and the development of the desert.

So, when local PBS affiliate KAET set off to make "Arizona Memories from the '60s," — a sequel to their popular look at the state in the 1950s — growth was an immediate centerpiece.

And, since Sun City was a standard bearer for thousands of retirement and family developments for the next 40 years, it was obviously an easy choice for a major spot in the program.

"Sun City made the cut right off the bat and

### IF YOU WATCH

- **WHAT:** "Arizona Memories from the '60s," a production of KAET channel 8
- **WHEN:** 7 p.m. Monday, 1 p.m. Wednesday, 4:30 p.m. March 9 and 1 p.m. March 14
- **WHERE:** Your favorite television set



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Shop-Lifter was the first attempt at a transit system for the retirees who moved to Sun City in the early 1960s.

the more we researched, the more interesting it became," said Don Hopfer, producer of "Arizona Memories."

While the creation and subsequent popularity of Sun City was a landmark event, the program also focuses upon the arrival of the Phoenix Suns, the construction of Grady Gammage Auditorium, the moving of London Bridge to Lake Havasu City and such cultural phenomenons as "The Wallace and Ladmo Show," and Sen. Barry Goldwater.

"The exciting thing about making this show is that we did something new," Hopfer said. "We asked viewers to send us their memories: Home movies, photographs and any kind of memorabilia. More than 150 people contacted us and more than 12 of them are in the show. This production could not have happened without their involvement."

The Sun City Historical Society was one such group and it allowed KAET to use three promotional films produced by the Del Webb Corp. in the 1960s — "In the Beginning," and "The Sun City Story."

"Arizona Memories from the '60s" accurately captured the spirit of those first few years or progress, said Jane Freeman, founder of the Sun City Historical Society.

"We decided if we were going to get into retirement developments we needed to put the amenities in first," Owen Childress, a former Sun City salesman says in the program.

Freeman said seeing tangible evidence of the amenities promised at earlier communities but never delivered set Sun City apart from other like

OVER

VF SUN CITY (HISTORY)

**From D1**

communities.

"When they came for the grand opening, you could start the buzz saw. The golf course was there and ready," she said.

Regardless of the amenities readily available, it seems that many of the residents of nearby Glendale and Peoria — the only substantial towns at the time — were skeptical of Sun City's future.

"We thought it was funny. No one thought it was going to fly," said Carole DeCosmo of the Sahuaro Ranch Foundation in Glendale.

But Sun City has thrived,

becoming the model for developments across the country. Unfortunately, however, many of the Sun City pioneers are no longer around to see the significance of the first master planned retirement community.

But the impact of their decisions continue to reverberate throughout the country.

"Sun City is not only an example of a monumental Arizona development but it brought Arizona to national prominence," Hopfer said.

*"Arizona Memories from the '60s," can be seen at 7 p.m. Monday, 1 p.m. Wednesday, 4:30 p.m. March 9 and 1 p.m. March 14 on channel 8.*

Del Webb, shown here at the opening of the Sundial Recreation Center in 1973, was the visionary behind Sun City and the development plan which spawned numerous look-alikes.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Mr. and Mrs. E.A. Britton, winners of the Sun City name contest, relax by the pool at the Civic Association, now known as Oakmont Recreation Center.



SUBMITTED PHOTO



VF SUN CITY (HISTORY)

# Arizona at 90



Photoillustration by Dan Kempton/The Arizona Republic

## People, events defined our history, future

By Charles Kelly  
The Arizona Republic

The most evocative images of Arizona are dusty frontier streets echoing with six-gun shots, the vistas of the Grand Canyon, the vast sweep of the Navajo Reservation.

But as the state celebrates its 90th anniversary Thursday, a look back at its history reveals that it has moved steadily away from its

maverick past and raw character toward urbanization, an increasingly high-tech economy and political stability.

The movement at times has been fitful, characterized by political dogfights, economic downturns and scandal. But Arizona continues on much the same course it has pursued for nine decades, while remaining, as Stephen Trimble wrote in *Arizona: The Land and the People*, "a symbol of the frontier, of the

desert and of the West."

Today, *The Arizona Republic* takes a look at turning points in the state's history, the leaders who shaped it, the events that led to the state's booming growth, the creation of its primary industries and the forming of Arizona's image on the national scene.

1960



The Arizona Republic

People flock to Sun City on its opening day in 1960.

### SUN CITY OPENS

Del E. Webb Corp. starts Sun City in the northwest Valley, one of the first retirement communities in the nation and one that will help establish the state's reputation for large, sophisticated retirement havens. Afterward, organized retirement living spreads across the state, making its mark with communities that include Sun City West, Sun Lakes, Leisure World and Pebble Creek Golf Resort in the Valley of the Sun, and Sun City Tucson, Saddlebrooke Country Club and Fairfield Homes Green Valley in southern Arizona.

FEB. 14, 1912

**ARIZONA BECOMES A STATE**

FEB. 23, 1929

**ARIZONA BILTMORE OPENS**

1941

**WORLD WAR II TRAINING SHOWCASES ARIZONA.**

1948

**MOTOROLA ARRIVES**

1950s

**AIR-CONDITIONING SWEEPS THE STATE**

1966

**GOLDWATER NOMINATED**

1968

**CAP APPROVED, FUTURE ENSURED**

1981

**O'CONNOR IS NAMED TO U.S. SUPREME COURT**

1988

**MECHAM IS IMPEACHED**

2001

**HISPANICS SPUR ARIZONA'S GROWTH**

# West Valley museums

Well more than a dozen museums are available in the West Valley for visitors of all ages and interests. A roundup of what's available:

NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	DESCRIPTION	HOURS	COST	PHONE	FOR MORE INFO
Adobe Mountain Railroad Museum & Desert Railroad	22822 N. 43rd Ave.	Phoenix	Miniature railroads & railroad museum	SU Noon-5, starting Sept. 6	Free/Donations accepted	(623) 386-5737	<a href="http://www.arizonaandpacificrr.com/spot/adobe/adobe.html">www.arizonaandpacificrr.com/spot/adobe/adobe.html</a>
Buckeye Valley Museum	10th St./Monroe Ave.	Buckeye	Local history & archaeology of the Buckeye Valley	W-F 1-4, SA 10-4, Oct-May	Free	(623) 386-4333	
Challenger Space Center of Arizona	21170 N. 83rd Ave.	Peoria	Smithsonian affiliate; science and space related exhibits and educational programs	M-F 9-4, SA 10-4	Adults: \$6, Seniors/students: \$4, 5 and under: Free	(623) 322-2001	<a href="http://www.azchallenger.org">www.azchallenger.org</a>
Deer Valley Rock Art Center	3711 W. Deer Valley Rd.	Phoenix	Museum, archaeological site and nature preserve operated by Arizona State University for research & public educational purposes	May-Sept: T-F 8-2, SA 7-5, SU 12-5 Oct.-April: T-SA 9-5, SU 12-5	Adults: \$5, 55 and over/students: \$3, 6-12: \$2, 5 and under: Free, ASU Students/Faculty: Free	(623) 582-8007	<a href="http://www.asu.edu/class/intfredology/dvrac">www.asu.edu/class/intfredology/dvrac</a>
Desert Caballeros Western Museum	21 N. Frontier St.	Wickenburg	Museum of western, cowboy and Native American arts and history	M-SA 10-5; SU noon-4 starting in September	Adults: \$5, Seniors: \$4, 6-16: \$1, Under 6: Free	(928) 684-2272	<a href="http://www.westernmuseum.org">www.westernmuseum.org</a>
Elsie McCarthy Sensory Garden	7637 N. 55th Ave.	Glendale	Tactile garden with dozens of plants and trees selected to stimulate the senses of sound, smell and touch, of special appeal to the visually impaired	Dawn to dusk, daily	Free	(623) 930-2820	<a href="http://www.ci.glendale.az.us/Recreation/Elsie-McCarthy-Sensory-Garden.cfm">www.ci.glendale.az.us/Recreation/Elsie-McCarthy-Sensory-Garden.cfm</a>
Glendale Community College Art Collection	6000 W. Olive	Glendale	Collection of paintings, sculptures and masks, and changing exhibitions, in John F. Prince Library	Summer: M-Th 7am-9pm Fall/Spring: M-Th 7am-10pm, F 7-4:30	Free	(623) 845-3755	
Glendale Police Museum	FOP Lodge #12 6821 N. 57th Ave.	Glendale	Memorabilia and artifacts detailing the 93-year history of the Glendale Police Department	10-4 every other Saturday, starting Sept. 6.	Free Donations accepted	(623) 930-2559	<a href="http://www.ci.glendale.az.us/police">www.ci.glendale.az.us/police</a>
Glendale Xeriscape Botanical Garden	5959 W. Brown St.	Glendale	Demonstration garden covering four acres and hundreds of plant varieties	Dawn to dusk, daily	Free	(623) 930-3596	<a href="http://gecko.gc.maricopa.edu/glendale library">gecko.gc.maricopa.edu/glendale library</a>
Katydid Insect Museum	5060 W. Bethany Home Rd. #7	Glendale	Non-profit museum of insects, arachnids, reptiles and other creatures	M-F 11-4; Oct-Feb, also open SA noon-4 1st & 3rd SA of month noon-4 After Sept. 20	Adults: \$3, Seniors/students: \$2, 4-10: \$1, 3 and under: Free	(623) 931-8718	<a href="http://www.insectmuseum.com">www.insectmuseum.com</a>
Manistee Ranch	51st/Northern Aves.	Glendale	1890s ranch and museum preserved by Glendale Historical Society	noon-4 After Sept. 20	Adults: \$5 Seniors: \$4 6-16: \$1	(623) 435-0072	
Marty Robbins Glendale Exhibit House	5804 W. Myrtle Ave.	Glendale	Museum honoring Glendale-born country music legend Marty Robbins	T-SA 10-2 Summer; T-SA 10-5 Winter.	Free Donations accepted	(623) 847-7047	<a href="http://www.friendsofmartyrobbins.org">www.friendsofmartyrobbins.org</a>
Pioneer Living History Village	3901 W. Pioneer Rd./Exit 225 off I-17N	Phoenix	Museum & replica of 1800s town with costumed interpreters & authentic old buildings	W-SU 9-2 during summer; W-SU 9-5, Oct-May	Adults: \$7, Seniors: \$6, Students: \$5, 3-5: \$4	(623) 465-1052	<a href="http://www.pioneer-arizona.com">www.pioneer-arizona.com</a>
Sahuaro Ranch	9802 N. 59th Ave.	Glendale	Historic ranch, pioneer museum with park & gardens	W-F 10-2, SA 10-4, SU 12-4, Closed: May 26-Sept. 27	\$3 to tour the mainhouse Children under 12: free	(623) 930-4200	<a href="http://www.sahuaroranch.org">www.sahuaroranch.org</a>
Southwest Museum of Engineering, Communications and Computation	Coury House, 5802 W. Palmyra Ave.	Glendale	Specialized technical archives and historical exhibits of radios, computers, radar, office & other electronic equipment	T-SA, 12-3; Call first	All ages: \$10	(623) 435-1522	<a href="http://www.smecc.org">www.smecc.org</a>
Sun Cities Area Historical Society	10801 W. Oakmont Dr.	Sun City	First house in Sun City, original development records	Summer: F & Sat: 10-noon - Sept. - May: T-F 1:30-3:30	Free	(623) 974-2568	
The Bead Museum	5754 W. Glenn Dr.	Glendale	International collection and changing exhibits of beads, beaded artifacts & history	M-SA 10-5, TH 10-8, SU 11-4	Adults: \$4, Children: \$2	(623) 931-2737	<a href="http://www.thebeadmuseum.com">www.thebeadmuseum.com</a>
The Bible Museum	2000 N. Litchfield Rd. in lobby of Hampton Inn & Suites	Goodyear	Selected exhibits from one of the world's largest collections of antique Bibles and religious manuscripts	24 hours a day, in hotel lobby	Free	(623) 536-8614	<a href="http://www.holylandpottery.com/museum_start.htm">www.holylandpottery.com/museum_start.htm</a>
West Valley Art Museum	17420 N. Avenue of the Arts	Surprise	2,800 works of art; international ethnic dress collection & art of Henry Varnum Poor & George Resler	T-SU 10-4	Adults: \$5, Students: \$2, Surprise residents, members and children under 5: Free	(623) 972-0635	<a href="http://www.wvam.org">www.wvam.org</a>

Source: Arizona Republic research

Dan Kempton/The Arizona Republic

# MUSEUMS Many dot West Valley

The featured museum in this article was the

WEST VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

So - check that folder!

## Museum discounts

There are enough other interesting gems in the West Valley that Glendale has been using their presence as a local tourism marketing tool. It declared October museum month, when discounts will be available in fliers distributed through local museums, public libraries, the Glendale Visitors Center and [visitglendale.com](http://visitglendale.com). The fliers should be available by mid-September.

Museums that charge admission will offer special deals and contests revolving around their exhibits. Folks who fill out their discount ticket stubs will be entered in a drawing for Phoenix Coyotes hockey tickets.

"This will be our third year doing this," said Lorraine Pino, tourism specialist with the Glendale Office of Tourism and Visitors Center. "It's a great opportunity for folks to explore museums in the West Valley."

Pino said west-side museums regularly attract visitors from throughout the Valley and state. Some, like Surprise's West Valley Art Museum and Peoria's Challenger Space Center, are well-established fixtures, while others, like Glendale's Marty Robbins Exhibit House, are relatively new.

Those looking to the outdoors can explore the north-west Valley's Adobe Mountain Railroad Museum and Desert

Railroad, or the Deer Valley Rock Art Center. Both take advantage of the open spaces and desert mountain vistas north of Loop 101 to show off their features.

"We're making this a big mechanical park," said Cliff Fought, a miniature railroader at the railroad museum. With N, HO and G gauge trains, a porter tank engine that once worked in the mines, and a live steamer, the park has more than seven miles of track on which it will offer free rides on Sundays from noon to 5 p.m. once the park reopens Sept. 6. Like many local attractions, it was closed for the summer.

The park hopes to add a 24-inch gauge railroad that once operated in a salt mine, and an antique tractor club will soon lease 20 acres to show its machines. A blacksmith club will start doing live demonstrations next spring.

## Rock Art Center

Not far south of the park is Deer Valley Rock Art Center, a 47-acre museum and preserve tucked against Adobe Dam. The museum building was designed by architect William Bruder, and a quarter-mile interpretive trail leads visitors past more than 1,500 petroglyphs leaping out from the boulders of Hedgpeth Hills where several ancient Native American cultures quarried corn-grinding materials.

Guided tours are available that offer detailed discussion of the art, though visitors also are free to ramble on their own and at their own pace. There are only two rules, says Assistant Director Marilyn Sklar: Don't leave the trail, and don't touch the rocks.

## More choices

Nature enthusiasts also have other choices, from the Glendale Xeriscape Botanical Garden or the Elsie McCarthy Sensory Garden to the Katydid Insect Museum.

On Oct. 11 the xeriscape garden launches a self-guided au-

dio tour of its collection of nearly 500 mature low-water plants on display. Visitors will be able to check out an electronic wand at the neighboring Glendale library. Pointing the wand at specific plants will trigger an array of information about them, said Jo Miller, Glendale's water conservation coordinator. Meanwhile, the nearby Elsie McCarthy Sensory Garden at 7637 N. 55th Ave. offers a tactile and sensory experience that is especially appealing to the visually impaired.

The Katydid Insect Museum features a veritable banquet of bugs, from butterflies to beetles with a few snakes and reptiles thrown in for good measure. This museum in downtown Glendale is especially popular with school groups.

Elsewhere on the west side, there is something for:

■ **Western history buffs.** Wickenburg's Desert Cabaleros Western Museum and the Buckeye Valley Museum offer exhibits on native cultures, the settlement of the early West and western Maricopa County specifically. The Pioneer Living History Village in northwest Phoenix offers a glimpse of pioneer life in the 1800s, replicating a period village with costumed interpreters giving it an authentic feel.

■ **Local history buffs.** Glendale's Sahuaro and Manistee ranches are two of the Valley's better examples of the local ranch culture at the turn of the last century, with both displaying period furnishings and detailed exhibits about life in Glendale's infancy. The Glendale Police Museum tells the Police Department's 93-year tale through historic photos, old booking records and various artifacts and memorabilia, including a 1948 Plymouth patrol car.

■ **Music fans.** The Marty Robbins Glendale Exhibit House has an array of music, memorabilia and exhibits about the life of one of Glendale's most famous natives, the late country music star Marty Robbins. During the winter

months, some of his feature films also are shown at the museum.

■ **Religious inquirers.** The Bible Museum, tucked in the lobby of Goodyear's Hampton Inn and Suites, contains several hundred rare antique Bibles and theological books plucked from one of the world's largest collections of antique Bibles. Visitors can ogle an estimated \$7 million in antiquities there.

■ **Science and technology geeks.** The Challenger Space Center, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution and a Valley-wide favorite, offers everything from space and space art exhibits to specialized education programs, including astronomy and planetarium workshops. By contrast, the Southwest Museum of Engineering, Communications and Computation at Glendale's Coury House is one of the Valley's smallest and most specialized museums, offering an archive of technical electronics manuals and an exhibit of electronic gizmos like early computing devices and radar. The exhibit is viewable by appointment only.

■ **Visual arts connoisseurs.** The West Valley Art Museum has a large collection, including a noted exhibit on international ethnic costumes. Glendale Community College's Prince Library has a collection of drawings, paintings, masks and sculptures open to the public. "It's world art, everything from prehistory to modern," said curator and faculty member Darlene Goto. And Arizona State University West's Art Gallery at the University Center Building features a variety of works from students and local and national artists.

■ **Crafts enthusiasts.** The Bead Museum, one of Glendale's oldest museums, hosts an international collection of beads and beaded craftwork, detailing their history through the eons. The 100,000-piece collection and various exhibits help patrons understand the importance of beads dating back to 30,000 B.C.

OVER

# + Around Town



File photo

In 1990, Vera Jean Painter stands in front of Sun City's first residence. Painter sold the house to the Sun Cities Historical Society in '89 for \$44,000.

## Sun City concept popular in east

The popularity of Del Webb's Sun City homes has hit the East Coast.

Thousands of retirees are taking a look at the new Sun City in Hilton Head, S.C., the second-largest of Del Webb Corp.'s seven retirement communities. Webb originated the Sun City concept in 1960 in Arizona, where it has three Sun Cities and a fourth one under construction.

Webb spokeswoman Martha Moyer said as many as 700 people a week are stopping by the sales center and at least 100 have committed to buying a home, even though the first homes won't be complete until August.

On the first day of sales last fall, 25 homes worth \$4.1 million were sold.

Webb announced in January 1994 that it would build in South Carolina.

By the time the new Sun City is finished in 17 years, it will encompass 8,600 homes on 5,600 acres west of Hilton Head Island.

DAILY NEWS-SUN SATURDAY, APRIL 5, AND SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 2003

# How the Northwest Valley was

*Editor's note: This is the first in a three-part series about the Northwest Valley's early development, and a brief glimpse into the changes that have transformed the area since then.*

**TODAY: YULI & CREOSOTE** — In the late 1800s, Peoria had just a couple dozen residents, and Sun City was still a community called Marinette.

**MONDAY: THE MELTING POT** — Northwest Valley communities became a melting pot of settlers while segregation was still a fact of daily life for school children.

**TUESDAY: DAILY NEWCOMERS** — Agricultural fields give way to retirement communities, and historical societies strive to retain the area's culture and memories as new waves of residents move in.

## FIELD DAYS: Pair of lifelong residents remember farm towns

**KATY O'GRADY**  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Amanda Durand, 79, and Mike Bejarano, 81, remember when almost everyone knew everyone in the Northwest Valley.

Today, they watch new houses and more traffic continue to sprout upon land that once held agriculture fields or creosote and sagebrush. They visit historical societies housed in Bejarano's old school and the Del Webb Corp.'s first home.

Memories of people like Bejarano and Durand, along with some old black-and-white photos, are just

about all that remain of the communities that preceded today's Northwest Valley.

In 1888, Peoria's population was 27. By 1929, when Bejarano was attending Peoria Central School, there were fewer than 300 in the community. Today, Peoria's population is estimated at about 107,000.

Bejarano commuted to school in Peoria but lived in Marinette. For years, the communities grew up together, but by 1957 they were headed down opposite paths. While Peoria continues to expand, Marinette died quietly and made room for Del E. Webb's first master-planned retirement community, Sun City — now home to about 38,300.

## MARINETTE'S HEYDAY

In 1957, the "Arizona Telephone

Street Guide and Householders Directory" for Marinette contained 35 names, including Durand's father. The town was already dying by that time, giving way to plans for Del Webb retirement havens while its neighboring communities later boomed into the municipalities that are the Northwest Valley.

But decades earlier, Marinette — centered roughly around 105th Avenue, running two or three miles long between Olive Avenue and Beardsley Road — was an agricultural hub. The community was established in 1915 when R.P. Davie cleared the land to start growing cotton and "yuli," which was a sort of tumbleweed that contained a milky substance he believed could help make a rubber compound for better tires.

**See OVERFLOW, A6**

OVER

"He came from New York. He was a mining engineer. He had a dream for gold," Durand said. "So coming through the area here, he found that this was pretty good level ground."

At picking time, from about July to April, the population in the one-mile townsite grew to more than 500 people, said Durand, an Arizona native. The surrounding well sites and their accompanying tent cities also snowballed with hundreds more people, mostly Mexican nationals coming to the area for work, she said.

"Not every well had a big population. The others had, I would say, 25 year-round framed homes. When they didn't have the little framed homes, they would set up tent cities because they could set them up really quickly," Durand said.

The tents were relatively nice, with wooden floors and canvas sides, she recalled. They were clustered around more than a dozen wells and became impromptu communities with names such as El Norte, which was north of Grand Avenue; El Verde, which means The Green; Las Botas, The Boots; Sal Si Puedes, Come Out If You Can; and Hollywood, named for the pretty girls who lived there.

**NEW GAME IN TOWN**

In 1920, Davie sold his holdings in Marinette to the Southwest Cotton Co., a subsidiary of Goodyear Tire and



KATY O'GRADY/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Mike Bejarano, right, and his son Juan read about some of Peoria's pioneers in the Peoria Historical Society, housed in Peoria Central School — where Bejarano went to school in 1929 Rubber Co. He had lost money in a sugar beet gamble and left town soon thereafter.

"He went bankrupt. He was trying to raise sugar beets," said Phyllis Street, a volunteer with the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

"He had boots that were curled up like a mining engineer's," said Durand, demonstrating the kneeling position of an engineer that would cause the ends of his boots to curl. "And those boots he walked in with, he walked out with those same boots on."

The community continued without him.

"El Mirage was the tailgate of Marinette, Arizona. We have as high as five generations in El Mirage and Surprise — that's the square mile of Surprise," said Durand, who moved from

Phoenix to Marinette in 1928 when she was 4.

Durand's father, Oswald Perez Monreal, thought 1920s Phoenix was too rough and tumble for his young family. The western town held the promise of a job at Marinette General Mercantile, just north of 105th and Grand avenues when Grand was still known as Vulture Road but before it was called the Wickenburg Highway. Monreal bought the mercantile and his wife, Isabel, became Marinette's postmaster, a position she held for 27 years before moving on to become Youngtown's postmaster.

"That was the congregation point. That's where I lived, in the grocery store — the post office was in the grocery store," Durand said.



Amanda Durand, 4, grew up amongst the cotton fields of the West Valley in Marinette. MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

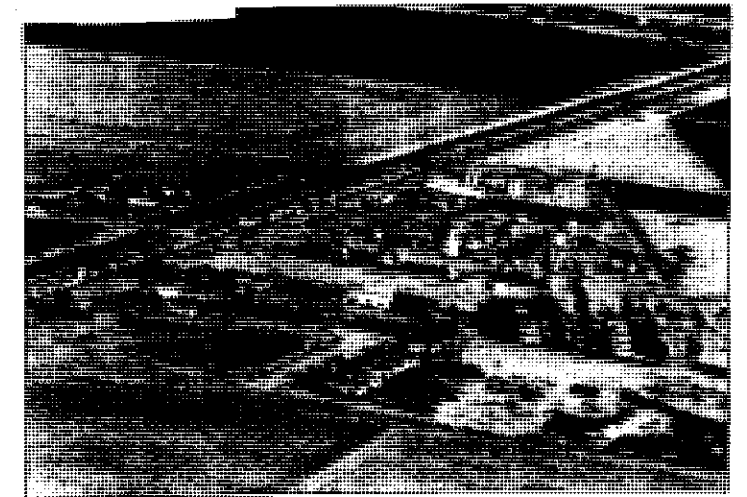


PHOTO COURTESY SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Del Webb Corp.'s first five model homes on Oakmont Avenue, in the photo above, started transforming the agricultural fields surrounding Marinette, the small development in the background along Grand Avenue. The homes were the first in what would become Sun City.



COURTESY OF SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mike Benjarano, left, and his son, Juan, sit in a replica of an old classroom with wooden floors at Peoria Central School, which now houses the Peoria Historical Society in downtown Peoria.

## Northwest Valley stirred melting pot

*Editor's note: This is the second in a three-part series about the Northwest Valley's early development, and a brief glimpse into the changes that transformed the area since then.*

**SATURDAY: YULI & CREOSOTE** — In the late 1800s, Peoria had just a couple dozen residents, and Sun City was still a community called Marinette.

**TODAY: THE MELTING POT** — Northwest Valley communities became a melting pot of settlers while segregation was still a fact of daily life for school children.

**TUESDAY: DAILY NEWCOMERS** — Agricultural fields give way to retirement

communities, and historical societies strive to retain the area's culture and memories as new waves of residents move in.

KATY O'GRADY  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sun City resident Amanda Durand learned Mexico's culture during childhood growing up in Marinette, the precursor to Sun City.

She spent first, second and third grade at Marinette Arizona School, Peoria District, which occupied two buildings where the Taco Bell/Kentucky Fried Chicken sits at Grand and 107th

**See DISCRIMINATION, A5**

### From A1

avenues. For fourth grade, she was bused to Peoria, just like Mike Bejarano, another Arizona native.

Bejarano's father, Sylvester, worked for Southwest Cotton Co.

"It's changed a lot," said Bejarano, visiting the Peoria Historical Society late last year with his son, Juan. "In those years, it was different. I don't know — there was a little discrimination of the Spanish. They called you names.

"We didn't fight or anything like that. We just listened to them and that was it," he said. "To me, I just thought it was better because I wasn't white. Today, they're different though."

Durand also recalls a bit of discrimination in the early- to mid-1900s. African-American children from throughout the Valley were bused to Marinette Arizona School, she recalled.

"It was horrible what the school system did to the black children, she said. The black children were from the

outlying Phoenix area. They were bused to Marinette.

That made for long days for most of those children, and eventually, some families chose to move closer to Marinette.

The first black family that moved (to El Mirage), so their children would not have to be on the bus from 4 o'clock in the morning till 9 o'clock at night," she said.

"So we had Okies and Spanish" and now black people in El Mirage, Durand said of the melting pot of the Northwest Valley.

There also was segregation at Peoria Central School where Durand and Bejarano attended.

"The Spanish-speaking children went into a building that was run by Mrs. Pike. I went into a building run by Mrs. Rice because I was an English-speaking child," said Durand, who now speaks both languages fluently.

### RETIREMENT HAVENS

Most of the memories are sweet for the two Arizona natives, despite the tough

times.

"You remember years ago, there was nothing," said Bejarano, 81. "It was just a little small town. ... There weren't very many people."

This was the 1930s, when the Great Depression and the Great Plains Dust Bowl were sending Midwesterners west in search of jobs and hope. Anglos were becoming more noticeable in the town by 1936, said Durand, who at the time was living with her parents in a home near 105th Avenue and Coggins Drive, a strip currently occupied by small businesses.

"I lived here all the time. I moved from house to house," she said. "I'm just a little old cotton-picker. I only went to 12th grade in Peoria. It was the J.G. Boswell Co. that educated me."

Durand graduated from Peoria High School in 1942, and by the 1950s, she and her husband, Rodrick "Johnny" Durand, were working for the James G. Boswell Co., which had purchased the 20,000-acre Marinette Ranch from Southwest Cotton Co. in 1936.

"I grew up with (Marinette). In 1954, I grew up with Youngtown. You know where Menke's Funeral Home is? That was my cotton office," Durand said.

Menke's is at 103rd Avenue and Coggins. The property was owned by J.G. Boswell's company in 1954, when Youngtown was incorporated as the nation's first retirement community, and the cotton office contained the only phone in the area outside of Peoria.

"When Youngtown was first born, they had no phones," Durand recalled. New homeowners came to her office to borrow the company phone.

Later that decade, Boswell, a Californian, sold his farmland to Webb, maintaining 49 percent interest in the Sun City development while Webb controlled 51 percent, said Jane Freeman, founder of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

### TUESDAY: Daily Newcomers.

Katy O'Grady can be reached at 876-2514 or kogrady@aztrib.com.

# Sun Citian predates growth

Part III of three-part series

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY: Founder hopes woman records memories

KATY O'GRADY  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

In 1969, as Del Webb's dream washed over agricultural fields and Marinette became a memory, Amanda Durand moved to Sun City, where she still lives.

The 79-year-old is one of the few area residents who remember the community's origins. She lived in Sun City before it existed and moved into the age-restricted community as it was being built.

Jane Freeman, founder of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society, said she would love to see Durand record her memories in a book one day. Freeman herself moved to the area in 1970 and believes the changes in just the last three decades have been remarkable.

"I think with all the growth, the historical society — any historical society — takes on a different and more important meaning, because with the rapid growth, we lose things," Freeman said. "At the time, we don't think it's important and we just let it slip by.

"When we first got here, the Basque shepherders used to bring sheep from Flagstaff down Olive Avenue, and the sheep dog would get in the road and stop traffic. I'd think, 'why didn't I get a picture of that?'"

Trying to preserve those memories, Juan Bejarano, 54, takes his father Mike to places like the Peoria Historical Society so he can learn the stories.

"I like to take him to places he's

with," Juan said. "That way I can pass it on to my kids and their kids.

"I was born in a farming community in Goodyear and not in a hospital, so I'll take my son and show him. That's where I was born in your grandmother's home.' They're astounded. So you have to have some kind of history. I think it's important, especially the way Arizona is growing."

As much as he tries to preserve the memories of the past, Juan accepts the changes that have come over the years: "I know progress — whenever there's progress, there's jobs for everybody. There's a lot better life. There's conveniences. When I was growing up, we had to walk two miles just to go to the store."

His father is more matter of fact.

"It's crowded, but I guess that's the way it is everywhere," Mike said.

Lee Turner, curator of the Peoria Historical Society, preserves the memories and the relics to educate today's schoolchildren about their forbears' lifestyles. The society, housed in the Peoria Central School, also serves as a place to reminisce for people like June Puckett and Bob Robertson, who stop in to visit and look around periodically.

Puckett's parents moved to Peoria in 1915, and her late husband's parents moved there in 1911. Her grandmother, Ellen Powers, used to wash linens and clothes for guests at the Wagoner mansion, which Turner said was the first home built in Peoria in 1889.

Bob and Arlene Robertson have lived in Peoria 56 years. Her mother's stove and washing basin are part of the museum displays. Farm equipment donated by Bob Robertson graces the front of the museum.

Freeman has a better understanding of the history since she founded the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

"There's pros and cons," Freeman said. "I preferred it when there wasn't as much traffic, but I can't complain when other people come in, because I, too, came in in 1970 from the East Coast. I was a 'foreigner.' So I can appreciate why people are coming in."

**Editor's note:** This is the final story in a three-part series about the Northwest Valley's early development and the changes that have transformed the area since then.

Katy O'Grady can be reached at 876-2514 or kogrady@aztrib.com.

See HISTORY, A3



# Popular road built on storied history

MICHAEL MARESH  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

As motorists leave northbound Loop 101 at Grand Avenue, a sign directs them to turn left if they want to go to Las Vegas or Wickenburg.

But while drivers can still take Grand Avenue, also known as U.S. 60, to reach those destinations, the road has become more useful as a local roadway in the Sun Cities and Surprise than it was as a through route.

Back in the 1870s, this was the Vulture Road, the way you got to Wickenburg and the gold discovered there.

Later, the road become useful as the main route from from

## From A1

a slowly growing Phoenix to a faster-growing Los Angeles, but that traffic now uses Interstate 10.

As suburbia burgeoned in the western part of Peoria, in the new Sun Cities, and in Youngtown, El Mirage and Surprise, the road also became a popular location for businesses to set up shop.

Now, as the Arizona Department of Transportation and the Maricopa Association of Governments look into improving and expanding Grand Avenue, some long-time transportation officials recall how this main roadway originally was used.

The Santa Fe completed its tracks from Prescott to Wickenburg to Phoenix in 1895, serving the gold mining interests in Wickenburg, which just missed being the territorial capital at a time when Phoenix was hardly of any importance.

Along its tracks ran the Vulture Road, which in 1914 was graveled as far as Marinette, the settlement 20 miles from Phoenix at what is now 103rd Avenue.

The road's builder, W.J. Murphy, called it "Grand Avenue."

Records are unclear, but somewhere in the 1920s, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors officially adopted

that name.

A photo in the Arizona Department of Library, Archives and Public Records shows the 1914 construction on that road in a nearly seamless agricultural landscape.

But as Grand Avenue's agricultural frontage gave way to development and communities like Sun City and Sun City West, the road changed.

"Grand was much better (as a highway) when it was a straight shot (to Wickenburg)," said Terry Johnson, transportation manager for the city of Glendale. He added that travel times to locations like Las Vegas were shorter because of the northwest direction of the avenue.

But Grand Avenue also served as the main route to Los Angeles, at least until Interstate 10 was completed two decades ago.

You can still see the remains of that popular road in the western part of Wickenburg, where dozens of motels once greeted weary travelers. Those structures now accommodate everything from craft shops to apartments. Only a few still accommodate the overnight visitors.

Johnson, who moved to Arizona in 1976, worked for the Arizona Department of Transportation and the

Maricopa Association of Governments for several years before taking his current job with Glendale.

He said the transportation plans he followed at ADOT, which included those for Grand Avenue, came from a 1960 study. Before that, most of the growth was service stations and motels, the majority of them in Wickenburg and near the Peoria-Glendale line.

While MAG and ADOT wanted to improve the flow of traffic on the original link to Las Vegas, Johnson said, they were unable to do so until 1985 due to a lack of funding.

Now, although Grand Avenue is no longer on the county or state freeway plan, officials again are looking at grade separations at its major cross streets and bridges over the railroad.

But Johnson admitted those separations might be only a short-term solution as more and more businesses continue to move onto Grand, slowing traffic as drivers brake to enter their parking lots.

When construction on Interstates 10 and 17 was completed in the early 1980s and linked the two highways, Grand Avenue became an alternate route for motorists traveling to Southern California.

Johnson pointed out that Grand was never upgraded as a way to travel to California because the planners saw Interstate 10 being completed.

Drivers headed to Wickenburg, Kingman and Las Vegas still sometimes choose the U.S. 60 route near Phoenix, but that gradually is changing because of the congested traffic they encounter.

Instead, folks use Loop 101 or Loop 303 to avoid parts of Grand Avenue, he said.

Or they take the Carefree Highway (State Route 74 near Lake Pleasant) west to where it intersects Grand at less-crowded Morristown.

"Right now people would rather go through Loop 101 or Loop 303," Johnson said.

In 1993, ADOT tried to relieve some of the congestion by making Grand Avenue divided highway from 99th Avenue to Loop 303, said Matt Burdick, public information officer for ADOT.

But the roadway narrowed again to two lanes at 163rd Avenue, and stayed to Morristown. Now, as a new interchange is being built, Grand and Loop 303, the state is widening Grand to four lanes west to Morristown.

Still, drivers are avoiding Grand's traffic when heading west, a trend that could

reverse again in the future if projected plans for Grand are carried out, Johnson said.

If Grand were to have six lanes from Loop 101 to Loop 303, he said, the road would likely once again be the preferred route to Las Vegas and Wickenburg.

"When these eight intersections come out, it will be a tough choice," he said. Johnson added that even if motorists choose not to use the route after the improvements are made, local traffic will reap the benefits.

And these eight intersections are only a small part of the face-lift Grand could experience in the next decade.

MAG, in its Grand Avenue Corridor Study, would still prefer the avenue to be an expressway, Johnson said.

"Expressway does not necessarily mean freeway," he said. "Expressways can be a higher-capacity street."

However, David French, vice president of URS Corp., which is the consultant MAG is using on the Grand expansion, said people in the 1980s lost interest in the project when it became apparent there were no funds.

French said URS and MAG now have more data they can dissect, but even then, one thing is certain.

"I can guarantee you it's not (going to be) a freeway," French said. "Grade separations are the question. That's what we are evaluating."

Michael Maresh can be reached at [mmaresh@aztrib.com](mailto:mmaresh@aztrib.com) or at 623-876-2521.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Grand Avenue's storied history dates back to the 1800s. This photo from the Arizona Department of Library, Archives and Public Records, dated 1914, depicts a nearly seamless agricultural landscape.

# Promises of 1960 fulfilled in Sun City

By Connie Cone Sexton  
The Arizona Republic

A year before Sun City opened, developer Del Webb blitzed America's cold, snowy regions with a national publicity campaign.

Full-page ads in newspapers and magazines invited visitors to the Jan. 1, 1960, grand opening and promised "An Active Way of Life."

Webb enticed retirees to put away their rocking chairs and bask in the glow of his retirement village.

Sun City was to be the place where you could be as young as you feel.

The lure proved to be good bait. More than 100,000 people from across the nation flocked to Sun City during its first weekend. Cars were nearly bumper to bumper as they drove Grand Avenue.

This wasn't simply a new home to buy. It was a new lifestyle to buy into. As visitors strolled through the five modest model homes, the brochure spoke to them: "In Sun City, you will enjoy complete individuality, privacy and happy, satisfying living, and most important, the right to do what you want . . . when you want . . . to live exactly as you wish."

Sun City held the promise of a Disneyland for the older set: Year-round golf and swimming, massive recreation centers where you could find unlimited bridge partners and pickup games of shuffleboard. There were dozens of hobby clubs to join and arts and crafts to learn.

During Sun City's first three days, 237 homes were sold. The tiny sales office got so crowded that salesmen had to sit on the floor, according to Jane Freeman, author of *Jubilee*, a history book of Sun City.

There was excitement among the buyers, Freeman said. "They had all come from somewhere else and they had that in common. They bonded."

Ina Dodt, 91, was one of the Sun City pioneers.

"It was just a thrill to be part of something entirely new. We were all just happy, just happy to be out here in the same place around people about the same age."

Her stories sound like a college girl's dorm days. Dodt said everyone was ready for a good time, always ready to party. She laughs when talking about dancing with other fellow "hula girls" around the recreation center pool.



Peter Schwepker/The Arizona Republic

**Ina Dodt, 91, poses in front of an original model home in Sun City. Dodt's late husband, John, was one of Del Webb's first salesmen. "It was just a thrill to be part of something entirely new," she said.**

Dodt's late husband, John, was one of Webb's first salesmen. He didn't retire until 1989.

"He loved his job and believed in the community," she said.

When John died in 1993 at 93, her relatives urged her to move back to Illinois. But she was firmly rooted.

"I would have just sat up there staring out the window. Here, I have things to do," she said.

Wally Britton also was there from the beginning of Sun City — not as a resident but as a cabinet installer.

"I thought it was the silliest thing to be out here 15 miles in the country," Britton said. "It was nothing but cotton fields and alfalfa."

But the new residents proved him wrong.

"There was a discussion at one time that they might build 650 houses total but it ended up at 1,200 and something the first year. And then it just mushroomed," he said.

Sun City eventually had 26,000 dwelling units.

Britton was in his 30s when Sun City opened. "Would I have considered living here? Never," he said, thinking back.

But something later clicked. He has lived there now 20 years.

Fellow Sun Citian Jim Hawks moved in 15 years ago. Like Freeman and Britton, he is a member of the Sun Cities Historical Society. Hawks, a former community planning consultant, links Sun City's success to its low property tax and its amenities.

"This was about the only place where you could buy a house and become a member of a golf club or tennis club," he said. "There were opportunities you never had all your life."

Even with its enticements, Sun City thrived because of its residents, Britton said.

"It's like a big happy neighborhood. I never could understand that when I was younger."

Sun City wasn't always Utopia. Over the years, residents grappled with paying school taxes into the Peoria Unified School District. They helped defeat several bond issues. Eventually, Sun City was cut out of the district.

The move scarred the community and was a public relations nightmare. Many Valley residents chastised Sun City for wanting to shuck responsibility for paying for schools.

A watchdog committee — the Sun Cities Taxpayers Association — also has been admonished over the years by the public for its lack of support for Valley projects, including those for recreation and transportation.

But thousands of Sun City residents each year spend many hours as volunteers. The streets are cleaned by the Sun City PRIDES, while the Sun City Posse helps patrol them. And despite their reputation about schools, many retirees devote countless hours in classrooms each year.

Community spirit is on the rise as residents celebrate Sun City's 40th anniversary. Activities are planned throughout the year, ending with a Dec. 17 celebration.

For Hawks, Sun City is worthy of study.

"It's been a social experiment," Hawks said. "There's one word that sums up what this place is about: activity. And that was a brave concept. But it worked."

Reach the reporter at  
Connie.Sexton@ArizonaRepublic.com or  
(602) 444-7118.

5/20/00



The Windsor \$12,750

Plan 14-A, 2 Bedrooms and 2 Baths, plus built-in range and oven.



The Dorchester \$14,450

Plan 16-B, 3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths, Dining Room, built-in range and oven.



The Rutledge \$14,550

Plan 17-C, 2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths, Leisure Room, built-in range and oven.



The Mountjoy \$12,750

Plan 14-B, 2 Bedrooms and 2 Baths, plus built-in range and oven.



The Trianon \$14,450

Plan 16-C, 3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths, Dining Room, built-in range and oven.



The Geneva \$15,950

Plan 18-A, 3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths, Leisure Room, plus kitchen built-ins.



The Arcadian \$12,750

Plan 14-C, 2 Bedrooms and 2 Baths, plus built-in range and oven.



The Melanie \$14,550

Plan 17-A, 2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths, Leisure Room, built-in range and oven.



The Maxwell \$15,950

Plan 18-B, 3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths, Leisure Room, plus kitchen built-ins.



The Churchill \$14,450



The Virginian \$14,550



The Heatherbrae \$15,950

Del Webb Corporation

Great deals, but you're too late. This is part of a brochure that was shown to prospective residents in 1960, when homes ranged from \$10,450 to \$15,950. Del Webb would throw in air conditioning for an additional \$650 to \$800, depending on the size of the house.



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Defoliated cotton bolls ready for harvesting can be spotted in fields along many West Valley roadways like this one on Litchfield Road. Most of Arizona's cotton crop is exported.

# Cotton weathers the storm

By JANICE TARLETON  
Staff writer

State cotton crops suffered some damage, but weathered the storm better than expected.

"It was not nearly as bad as people were expecting," said Robby Barkley, a grower from Yuma where the storm hit hardest. "I would say we got two to two-and-a-half inches in most of the farm areas and there was no flooding problems or strong winds," he said.

The salvation for Yuma cotton growers is that 80 percent of the cotton was already picked and placed in tarp-covered modules, said Barkley, chairman of the Supima Association of America. Yuma growers typically pick three weeks to a month ahead of the rest of the state, he said.

Still, the grade of the cotton may drop a point or two. A drop in one point translates into a deduction of about \$50 a bale for Pima and \$10 to \$15 a bale for Short Staple, Barkley said.

Hardest hit were Yuma farmers who planted winter crops such as lettuce and broccoli in the past few days. "They'll have to replant," he said.

Statewide, about 75 percent of the cotton is still in the field and it will probably suffer "considerable damage," said Andy Dougherty, field



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Cotton bolls begin as flowers which grow into hard green balls. As the plant grows the ball opens and then farmers spray it with chemicals to make the leaves fall away.

representative for Calcot. The majority of the state didn't get hit as expected, and he agreed that the impact in Yuma was "probably very little" because of the early harvest.

There will probably be grade damage, but that will vary from area to area depending on the amount of rain, wind and the cotton's stage of growth. Rain and

wind strings out the cotton and causes the foliage itself to stain the white fiber. The result is a 5- to 10-cent drop in price per pound, Dougherty explained.

If the crop has been defoliated in preparation for picking, damage would be more significant than if the cotton still had the protection of the green boll.

## Arizona ranks No. 2 in production

By BRUCE ELLISON  
Staff writer

All across the Northwest Valley these days, cotton is king.

From fields at 83rd Avenue and Thunderbird Road in Peoria, to 91st Avenue and Camelback Road in Phoenix and west to the White Tank Mountains, the alert motorist will spot thousands of acres of cotton, the white bolls open and dangling in rich abundance from plants now starting to lose their leaves.

The defoliation is deliberate, created to allow an easier time at picking the cotton — which these days is done by machine, not by the back-breaking labor of the stooped.

Cotton is the king of Arizona agriculture, says the Arizona Cotton Growers Association. In 1995, the high-value crop brought in about \$365 million from just 362,000 of the state's 1.5 million irrigated acres.

Enough cotton was produced in the state to make a pair of denim jeans for every man, woman and child in the country.

▶ See Goodyear tires, A5

# Goodyear Tires ran on cotton

◀ From A1

The state produces two types of cotton, upland and American Pima, which can't be distinguished from each other by appearance at this stage of their development. One has white flowers, the other yellow.

It is those flowers that ripen into hard green balls, which eventually open into cotton bolls containing the white, puffy fiber that holds the cotton plant's seeds.

Machines harvest the cotton after the plants are defoliated; the crop is then crammed into large metal crates called modules about the size of truck trailers.

Harvesting begins in earnest next month, and the gins will be busy through the season that ends in December, then close until late next year, said Lon Emerson of Calcot, a Valley cotton co-op.

The gin separates the seeds from the cotton in a mechanized process perfected 150 years ago by Eli Whitney.

Arizona's cotton fiber, called lint, is almost all exported, Emerson said — to Egypt and the Far East, where it often comes back in the form of finished clothing. Arizona cot-

ton is high-quality and long-staple, so it brings a good price on world markets.

Cash cotton was trading last week at about 75 cents a pound, a price Emerson said was a little lower than usual.

The lint is packed in 480-pound bales for shipment; the cotton seeds are crushed into oil, which goes into such things as salad dressings.

One of the West Valley's larger gins, on Cactus Road in Waddell, is operated by the Anderson Clayton Co., an international giant in the cotton business that does everything from financing crops in the Valley to selling the finished product on world markets.

Anderson Clayton now is a subsidiary of Queensland Cotton Holdings Ltd., an Australian firm which bought the company on Aug. 15.

Cellulose from the remains of the ginning operation is used in making paper, furniture stuffing and cattle feed. Some even goes into mass-produced cookies, industry official said.

Because of the long growing season and measured irrigation, the cotton growers group said, "Arizona's average yield per acre is consistently the highest in the nation, and

more than twice the national average."

The state is the nation's No. 2 producer of Pima cotton, and 18th in upland cotton.

Cotton farming in the Valley got a big boost during World War I when supplies of Egyptian cotton were cut off. The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., which needed cotton fiber to make tire cord, acquired land in what is now Goodyear and Litchfield Park, and planted thousands of acres to produce its own cotton for the tire manufacturing process.

Along the way, Goodyear executives found it pleasant to visit the Valley in winter, when it was cold and snowy back in Akron, Ohio, and so built the original Wigwam as a kind of guest lodge for visiting brass.

That guest house eventually expanded into the five-star resort that is now the center of Litchfield Park. Goodyear sold it years ago, and the rubber giant no longer grows its own cotton. The J.G. Boswell Co. ended up with the northern part of those Goodyear cotton fields, selling the land to Del Webb in 1959. Some of that cotton land is now Phase I of Sun City.



# Then & Now

## the Northwest Valley

1883: Arizona Canal Co. hires entrepreneur William J. Murphy to spearhead construction of a 44-mile-long canal from the Salt River to the Northwest Valley; construction workers on the project settle in Sonorita, located south of the Glendale townsite; water flowed from the canal in May 1885, attracting some of the early white settlers to Glendale.

1888: Peoria's population is 27; Postal Service started in Peoria.

1891: First school built in Peoria; William J. Murphy convinces Burgess A. Hadsell, colonizer for the German Reformed Church, to bring church members to settle in Glendale; Hadsell also sells the community to Easterners through newspaper ads.

Mid-1890s: A flood of immigrants hits Glendale; efforts to build railroad access to the area begins.

1895: Railroad completed between Prescott and Phoenix. Peoria railroad depot built.

1895: Major flood strikes the Valley, flooding the Arizona canal.

1906: Peoria Central School built; Beet Sugar Factory built in Glendale, bringing hundreds of jobs with it.

1910: Glendale incorporates; Peoria's population is about 300.

1912: Arizona becomes a state; post office opens in Marinette.

1915: Impressed by the success of neighboring Peoria, R.P. Davie clears sagebrush and mesquite between 99th and 111th avenues and establishes Marinette, named after his hometown in Wisconsin.

1916: Glendale's Beet Sugar Factory closes.

1920: Edwards' Hotel in Peoria wired for electricity; R.P. Davie sells his holdings in Marinette to the Southwest Cotton Co., a subsidiary of Goodyear Tire & Rubber.

1922: Peoria High School completed.

OVER

1922: First fire truck, a 1921 Model T, in service in Peoria; Peoria's first fire station is built in Washington Park; Grand Avenue paved through from Peoria to Marinette.

1929: Peoria's population is 250 to 300.

1930s: Dust Bowl and Great Depression send Midwesterners west seeking jobs, boosting the Northwest Valley's population.

1936: Southwest Cotton Co., a subsidiary of Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. sells its 20,000-acre Marinette Ranch to J.G. Boswell Co.

1937: Homer C. Ludden, a Glendale real estate developer and state legislator, subdivides a rural square-mile parcel into low-cost home sites for the area's agricultural workers, naming it Surprise after his Nebraska hometown; El Mirage established by migrant farm workers.

1941: America enters World War II; Luke Field reactivated; POW camp set up near Cotton Lane and Olive Avenue

1954: Developer Ben Schleifer and banker Clarence Suggs form Youngtown Land and Investment Co., buy a 320-acre dairy ranch and established Youngtown as nation's first age-restricted community; Peoria incorporated.

1956: Peoria Post Office receives its first telephone and ballpoint pens.

1957: Marinette householders directory lists 35 names.

1960: Sun City opens; Peoria's population is 2,593; Youngtown and Surprise incorporate; nation's first AARP chapter opens in Youngtown.

1961: Glendale begins to boom after annexing four square miles south of the city's limits, nearly doubling the city's population.

1978: Sun City build out complete; Sun City West opens.

1980: Peoria's population is about 12,171.

1990: Peoria's population is about 50,618.

1996: Sun City Grand opens; Rio Salado Lifelong Learning Center opens in Surprise.

1997: Sun City West build out complete.

1998: Youngtown loses its age-restriction status.

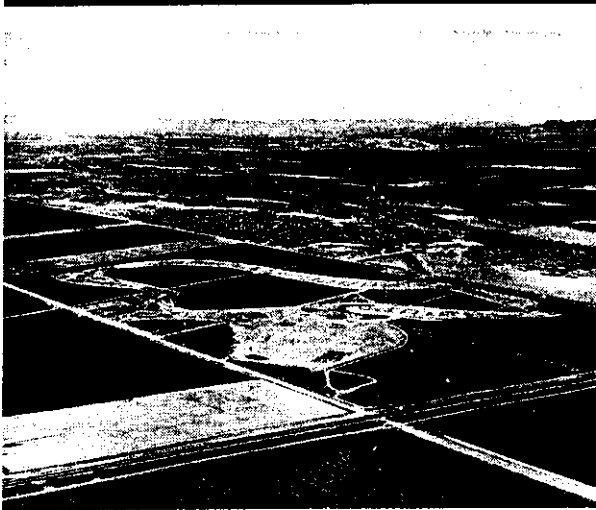
2000: Youngtown's population is 3,010.

2001: Surprise attracts Kansas City Royals and Texas Rangers to its Cactus League spring training stadium, which opened in 2002; New Joy Charter School opens as Youngtown's first school.

2002: Glendale issues first building permit for new Coyotes hockey arena and approves final development agreement for Arizona Cardinals stadium and multipurpose facility.



SUNDAY, AUGUST 6, 2000 • THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC



Republic file photo

1959

## IN CONTINUUM

### Sun City

In 1959, 12 miles of open fields divided Peoria and Sun City when Arizona's retirement community started its roots in northwest Phoenix.

The first aerial photo, shot toward a southwest direc-

tion, shows plenty of space, a black, paved Grand Avenue, a well-defined 107th Avenue and a cluster of houses identified as Youngtown. Tiny specks of houses in the distance were the "first model houses," completed in 1960, says Ryan L. Peterson, public relations supervisor for Del Webb's Sun City Grand.

Del E. Webb built Sun City



Republic file photo

1974

in three phases between 1960 and 1978, from south to north. Phase One is from Olive to Grand avenues. Phase Two is from Grand Avenue to Bell Road, and the last tract was built from Bell Road to Union Hills, Peterson said.

The 1974 photo, taken 15 years later with an aerial lens aimed directly south, illustrates an explosion of retirement homes that end at

Grand Avenue. On the northeastern corner of 107th Avenue, Webb built a structure called Highway House, a temporary dwelling for prospective buyers. The house turned into King's Inn, which is now a Fry's grocery store.

When Sun City was completed in 1978, it spilled north of Grand Avenue.

The final aerial photo shows a view north toward



Photo courtesy of Del E. Webb Construction Co.

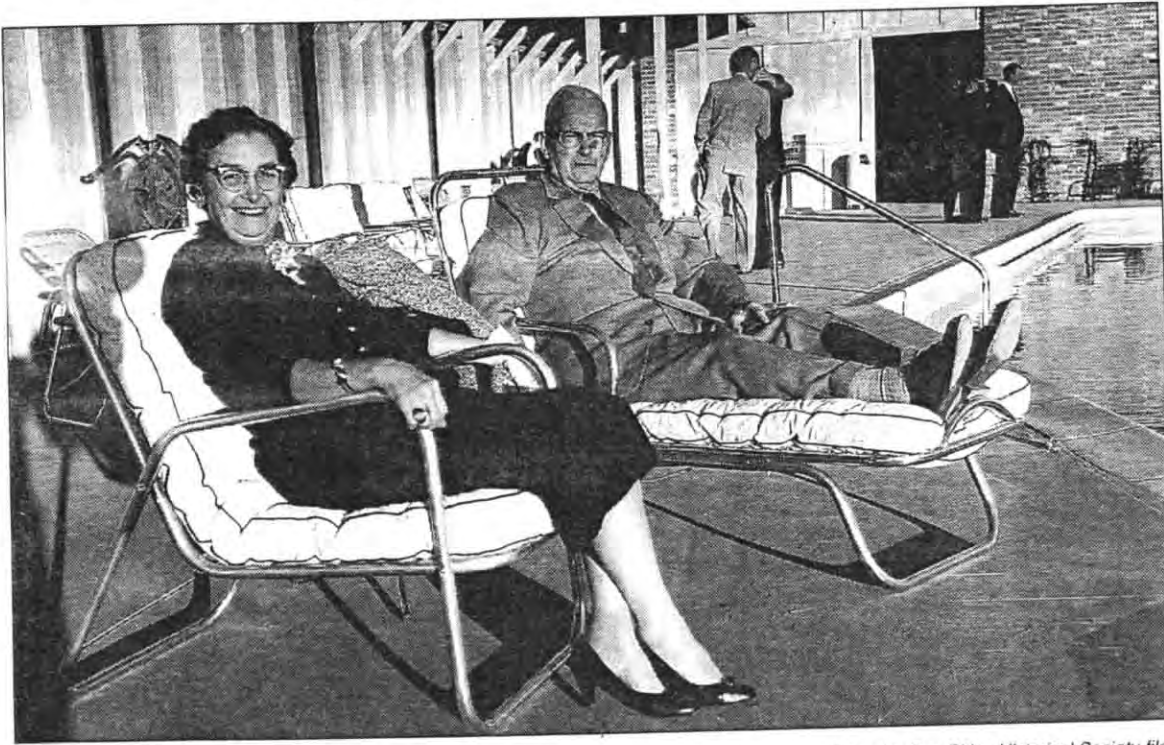
1978

Thunderbird Road. The Lake View Center appeared with a body of water during the late 1960s on the corner of Thunderbird Road and Del Webb Boulevard. The center is one of seven recreation sites in Sun City.

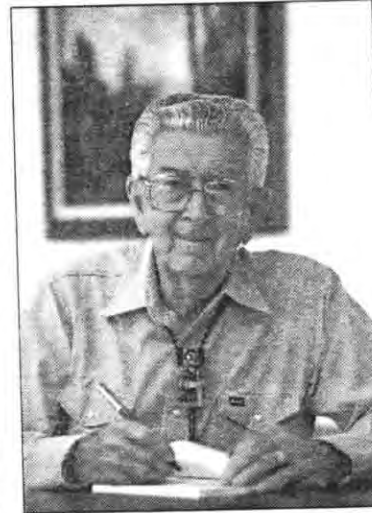
Today, there are 26,000 houses in Sun City occupied by 46,000 retirees on 8,900 acres of land.

- Betty Reid

# Raising Arizona in '50s, '60s, '70s



*From the Sun Cities Historical Society files*  
Mr. and Mrs. E.A. Britton, winners of the Sun City name contest, relax poolside at Oakmont Recreation Center.



Albert F. Tudor is the author of "Along the Old Vulture Road." To order his book, send \$14 to: Cowhide Publications, P.O. Box 24, Sun City, Ariz., 85372-0024.



*From the Sun Cities Historical Society files*  
Myron Floren draws the crowds to the Sun Bowl in Sun City's early days.

# Retiree industry makes its mark

By ALBERT F. TUDOR  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Fabulous Fifties, the Sizzling Sixties and the Soaring Seventies all helped make the Journey from 1951 to 1975 one of the most spectacular periods in Arizona's history.

The communities along the Vulture Road — the old wagon road between Wickenburg and Phoenix — were ready, willing and able to help shape events of the last half of the 20th century.

Few called it the Vulture Road any more. It was Grand Avenue or U.S. Highway 60, a major transportation link between Phoenix and the West Coast.

Our minds reel at the development taking place all around us in the Northwest Valley. Although it may seem to be a modern-day phenomenon, today's growth is built on a solid foundation laid in the third quarter of this century.

We who lived in this area in the 1940s and early '50s were accustomed to seeing Indian women selling their baskets, pottery and jewelry on downtown Phoenix streets, cowboys squatting against store fronts, and even an occasional miner leading his burro into town.

We were not, however, prepared for the dynamic changes that began to overwhelm this relatively small western town.

During World War II, many thousands of ex-service men and women returned to live here — starting our first real population

explosion.

The electronics and computer industries moved here and became major factors in our economy, which had been dependent on the 4 Cs: copper, cattle, cotton and citrus.

Older people (we weren't yet senior citizens) discovered Arizona — and Arizona began to promote the state as a haven for retirees. The Sun Belt migration to Arizona had begun.

Arizonans in the 1950s built bomb shelters in back yards, put on funny glasses to watch 3-D movies, twirled hula hoops and shook our heads as Elvis Presley wowed our teenagers.

Over the Christmas/New Year holiday of 1949-50, Phoenixians were delighted when KPHO-TV began transmitting programs from a tower atop the Hotel Westward Ho.

Phoenixians flocked to Sky Harbor in 1952 and marveled at our modern air terminal that served 44 commercial flights daily, and had parking space for 850 cars just steps from the terminal (since demolished by progress).

Shopping in the Valley of the Sun was never the same after the 1957 opening of the spectacular Park Central Shopping Center, the first shopping area outside of downtown Phoenix. Christown and Thomas malls soon followed the trend.

Marketing people called the 1960-1970 years the Sizzling Sixties. Others called it a decade of chaos and despair. The Vietnam War dominated the period. There

were political assassinations, racial tensions and riots, and campus unrest. Hippies and Flower Children were part of the scene.

After a 40-year struggle to shed our territorial status, Arizonans in 1962 celebrated the 50th anniversary of statehood.

During this period, intense national advertising campaigns were carried on by chambers of commerce, banks, utilities and developers — all designed to attract clean light industry and commercial ventures as well as tourists, conventions and retirees.

So successful were these efforts that major companies selected Phoenix for home or regional office and manufacturing plants. Glass and steel high rises changed the skyline. Tourist and convention business boomed. Expanding job markets attracted residents. The "retiree industry" made this market a major contender in the fiercely competitive business of promoting Sun Belt cities.

As booming Phoenix grew up, it also grew out. The flight to the suburbs had begun as city dwellers sought more open space, cleaner air and a different way of life. The exodus benefited many outlying communities — cities and towns that were already hard at work promoting their attributes and positioning themselves for the growth ahead.

Glendale, founded in 1892, was still a small town of 8,000 people, mostly engaged in agriculture in 1950 when things began stirring. People who

worked elsewhere moved to Glendale to enjoy the friendly, small town atmosphere.

The Army's Luke Field (closed since 1946) was reactivated and expanded in 1951, a year after the Korean War began. Renamed Luke Air Force Base, it created many jobs and sparked a construction boom in Glendale and beyond.

In 1954, John F. Long opened Maryvale, the Northwest Valley's first master planned community. Glendale's first hospital opened in 1960. By that time, business was booming and the population had climbed to 16,000.

Part of Sahuaro Ranch became the site of Glendale Community College in 1965. The town's first municipal airport came with the 1971 purchase of Airhaven at 77th and Olive Avenues.

Glendale's retail business suffered a double whammy in 1973 with the opening of West Valley Mall and then the huge Metrocenter. The setback was temporary, and Glendale continued to expand its industrial, commercial and residential bases to become one of Arizona's largest cities by 1975, when the population reached 67,000.

Peoria, the oldest community

in the Northwest Valley, was founded in 1888 by families from Peoria, Ill. Cotton was "King," but many other crops were grown, and sheep and cattle raising was big business.

With incorporation in 1954, Peoria had 1,924 people within its 1-square-mile area. Growth began as the town became a popular shopping area for Luke Air Force Base, Youngtown (opened 1954) and then Sun City in 1960.

The town became the "Rose Central of the World" in 1956 when Jackson-Perkins Co. planted large tracts of land in roses.

Sensing the tremendous growth ahead, Peoria was already planning to transform the once-sleepy farming area into one of Arizona's leading growth cities.

That vision became reality before the 20th century ended.

Youngtown was built on part of Gilbert and Frances Greer's ranch, established in 1942 between the Agua Fria River and 111th Avenue, south of Grand. Greer Ranch was widely known for its dairy products, fruits and vegetables.

Gilbert died in 1949, but Frances carried on. In early 1954,

*over*

Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz. Tuesday, May 5, 1998

# Author treks Vulture Road

By DAVID MILLER  
Staff writer

As a kid growing up in Connecticut, Al Tudor's mind was always on the Old West. The cowboys, the ranches, the lore of the frontier — all filled his fantasies. And more than 50 years later, they would fill the pages of his book.

Tudor moved to Phoenix in 1943 and found exactly what he'd imagined: a cowtown still immersed in the Old West. Here in the '40s, the local sheriff toted pearl-handled pistols and the West survived in more than the pages of dime-store novels.

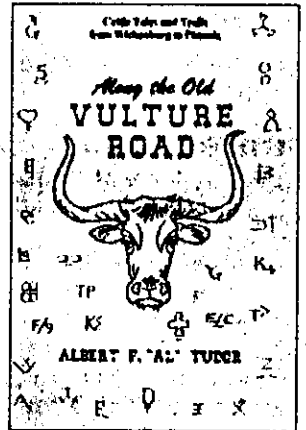
And though he never learned to ride a horse or throw a rope, Tudor did manage to visit scores of Arizona ranches and towns. Now, after years of compilation, that research forms the basis for his book, "Along the Old Vulture Road."

Published in March, the Sun City resident's book chronicles in short story form the tale of the trail that bridged the scope of the West Valley. The Old Vulture Road, of which part is now known as Grand Avenue, originally linked the town of Wickensburg to a military camp known as Phoenix, with ranches dotting the line in between, along with what would become the Sun Cities, Peoria and Glendale.

And though the road never reached the fame of its northern cousin, Route 66, it still saw many a traveler venturing across the desert to the cool hills of Prescott. In the '20s, that trip could take as much as two days by automobile, Tudor noted in his book.

"I believe you will be pleasantly surprised at just how much of the Old West, past and present, you can still discover along the Old Vulture Road," Tudor wrote.

Over the years the road would



Steve Chernek/Daily News-Sun

Sun City author Al Tudor's book, "Along the Old Vulture Road," chronicles some of the history of the Northwest Valley.

change almost as much as the burg in which it ended, Phoenix.

"Phoenix originally was just a little hay camp that served the military," Tudor said Saturday, following a presentation for the Youngtown Historical Society.

But that military link made it vital to the ranchers and farmers whose spreads dotted the road. And so the highway became a vital commercial artery.

It also linked another well-known getaway to Phoenix, the rejuvenating waters of Castle Hot Springs.

Tudor's book chronicles all this growth, along with his lifelong interest in cattle brands. In fact, the

book that became "Along the Old Vulture Road" started out as a more grandiose work, called "Cattle Brands of the American West."

He eventually had to scale that back. But the former APS official says he'll one day get it all into print. "I have the next two books about a third written," he said. "The next will be titled 'Famous People of Arizona Past and Arizona Present.'"

In the meantime, the 79-year-old will be promoting his Vulture Road collection, available at the Sun Cities Area Historical Society or by mail.

To contact Tudor about the \$11.95 book, call 972-8275 or write to Cowhide Productions, P.O. Box 2244, Sun City, Ariz. 85372-2244.

# Living history

## County planner spins tales about Sun Cities' roots

By BRUCE ELLISON  
Staff writer

4-18-96

**SUN CITY WEST** — As a teen-ager, Abe Harris of Buckeye used to cut cotton near Marinette — which is now called Sun City.

As a young man, he delivered hay to Lizard Acres for the 35,000 head of cattle being fed there.

Lizard Acres is now called Sun City West.

"And, yes," Harris, 59, assured members of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society on Wednesday afternoon, "there was life in the area before Del Webb."

It was Webb who came up with the idea of a huge retirement community, marketed on a grand scale, and who converted thousands of acres of cotton fields and grazing lands into the 70,000-resident Sun Cities over the past 36 years.

But Harris and his family, Texas migrant workers, were on the land long before Webb, he said.

"I can assure you that life before Webb was completely different from the lifestyle you now enjoy," he said.

Harris, who is a member of the Maricopa County Planning and Zoning Commission, said his family moved to Arizona in 1944 "because there was cotton all over the place, and we folks from Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas knew how to pick cotton."

The area had not yet attracted Hispanics, who now

area south of Grand Avenue down to Gila Bend, Harris said, though it is no longer used.

"We all lived in what you called labor camps," he said. One can be seen two miles south of Interstate 10 on Palo Verde Road, at the south end of the Sun Valley Parkway.

Housing was an adobe shack, "four walls and a bare bulb, with everything else (such as water and toilets) outside."

"We had a rough time in the fields, mostly because of the rattlesnakes. Some days, you could kill 20. Every picker had a sharp knife, to use to cut the puncture wound and suck out the poison," he said — something doctors no longer recommend.



Steve Cherek/Daily News-Sun

Margaret Grotmeyer of Sun City West shares a laugh with Abe Harris of Buckeye after his speech to the Sun Cities Area Historical Society Wednesday in the Northwest Valley before the Sun Cities were developed.

make up a large part of the farm workers, he said. Instead, buses were sent to black communities back in the cotton belt, to bring back workers. "They provided the transport and the housing," he said — with cotton picking starting in July.

"There were no automatic

machines back then," he said. "We were the machines."

After moving back and forth for two years, his parents decided to stay in Arizona, Harris said, and found housing near Buckeye. Not in it, "because black people couldn't live in Buckeye in

those days." Instead, they were sent to Allentown, a small black housing project developed just for them in the Salt River bed that eventually was destroyed by flooding.

Housing for such migrants still exists in parts of the

► See Society glimpses, A5

Eventually, his father bought a truck, and began hauling supplies from the Buckeye area to what is now the Sun Cities. His son, Abe, soon was driving trucks after school and on weekends, bringing in cash income.

"Working up into Marinette and Lizard Acres, I tell you I never had a dream that it would be anything other than what it was then, cotton and cattle.

Answering a question, he said most field workers thought of Youngtown — established for retirees in 1954, six years ahead of Webb — as "just another small town by the tracks.

"We didn't understand what it was. It wasn't promoted like Webb's was. You were always hearing something about Sun City."

The field workers did see Webb as a possible additional source of income, though, Harris said.

"When I found out he was completing 11 homes a day, I just couldn't believe it."

Later, answering questions, Harris said that pay for the cottonfield work in the 1950s was about \$4 a day — "that was 40 cents an hour for 10 hours."

He said he and other migrant children in Arizona attended school because that was the law. But they also worked, he said.

"When I was growing up, it was straight to the fields from school, and straight to the fields on Saturday. You had to help pay your way."

These days, Harris said kids may get in trouble because they have no concept of the idea of work, no respect for their parents, and little respect for education. "I have lost the moral values to make a family," he said with considerable applause.

# SC future is bright, survey says

## Home values up, satisfaction high

By Robert Barrett  
Staff writer

**SUN CITY** — The original price range for homes in Sun City when it opened on Jan. 1, 1960, was \$8,500 to \$11,500.

"The ones that cost \$11,500 were on the golf courses," Anna Russ said.

In 72 hours, 100,000 people had viewed Sun City's model homes and 237 were purchased, she said.

Last year, the median price of the 961 homes sold in Sun City was \$80,000.

Those numbers show how home values have increased in Sun City and "the next 20 years should produce a rising demand for housing" as baby boomers retire, Russ said.

Those were some of the findings disclosed in the second of three presentations of the "Study for the Future," a private survey of Sun City by the ProMatura Group of Oxford, Miss. The survey, conducted last year, was underwritten by the Del Webb Corp. for the Sun City Home Owners Association. Webb paid an undisclosed sum for the 400-page survey and plans to use the information in other areas where it is proposing similar developments.

Sun City offers a variety of dwellings, ranging in size from 700 to 4,000 square feet, said Russ, a Home Owners Association member, last week at the presentation of "Sun City: Its Property" at Marinette Center.

VF - SC

ARIZONA REPUBLIC

November 8, 1995

# SUN CITY

residents, James Hawks, a Home Owners Association member, told the audience.

Having Sun City in the Valley is like having the Super Bowl played here 3 to 4 times every year, he said. Super Bowl XXX is expected to bring \$170 to \$185 million to the state in January. Sun City brings \$680 to \$700 million each year, Hawks said.

"Another way to look at it is that we put \$700 million into the economy each year and Luke Air Force Base puts \$700 million into the economy each year," Hawks said.

The spending has attracted merchants; there are about 460 businesses in the community, he said.

The ProMatura Group stopped residents in shopping areas of Sun City and asked them about their buying habits and what they thought of the local businesses, Hawks said. The survey results indicate:

- 25 percent visit at least one Sun City business each day.

- 65 percent spend \$20 or less per shopping trip.

- 33 percent said they routinely shop outside of Sun City.

- 98 percent said they use banking and financial services in Sun City.

- 23 percent said Arrowhead Towne Center, 79th Avenue and Bell Road, was the most frequently visited non-Sun City business.

The survey also showed that some of the small retailers, shoe stores, for example, are beginning to struggle because they are losing customers to shopping malls, such as Arrowhead.

As a result, Sun City's turnover rate for commercial property is

## BUSINESS OUTLOOK

There are about 460 businesses in Sun City. Here is a sample of their responses to the ProMatura Group survey:

- 82 percent have revenues of \$250,000 or less.

- 81 percent say business is good.

- 81 percent believe Sun City customers are loyal.

6 percent to 7 percent and the vacancy rate is 7 percent to 9 percent.

"This is acceptable," Hawks said.

However, commercial property owners may have to build a mall-type environment in the community to keep Sun City customers, he said.

The third and final part of the survey, "Sun City: Perceptions & Predictions," will be presented twice, next Wednesday at 2 p.m. at the Mountain View Center, 9749 N. 107th Ave. and a repeat presentation at 2 p.m. Nov. 17 at the Marinette Center, 9860 Union Hills Drive.

The survey will not be available for reading by to the public until after the presentations are complete. Once the programs have been presented, the public is welcome to come into the Home Owners Association offices and read the survey, officials said.

ProMatura gathered its information by contacting about 2,000 people and holding focus groups, getting written responses to ques-

## SUN CITY SERVICES

The ProMatura Group study showed a comparison between views of Sun City residents and an AARP survey of the necessary services that seniors want to be located within a half mile of their residence:

- Grocery store — Sun City, 33.5 percent; AARP, 33 percent.

- Pharmacy — Sun City, 30.8 percent; AARP, 25 percent.

- Recreational facilities — Sun City, 30 percent; AARP, 6 percent.

- Doctors' offices — Sun City, 24.1 percent; AARP, 25 percent.

- Hospital — Sun City, 18.8 percent; AARP, 24 percent.

- Cultural Resources — Sun City, 11.5 percent; AARP, 11 percent.

- Public transportation — Sun City, 8 percent; AARP, 19 percent.

- Children/grandchildren — Sun City, 1.7 percent; AARP, 14 percent.

Source: ProMatura Group survey.

tions and conducting face-to-face and telephone interviews.

Those participating in the survey were residents living in Sun City year round and part-time residents, who were contacted while they were out of state. Others contacted for the survey included business and professional people in the community and surrounding area and members of social, service and religious organizations.

## SUN CITY SPENDING

Sun City residents spend \$630 million to \$700 million per year. Here is the percentage spent in Sun City by category:

- Food or grocery — 90 percent.

- Restaurant — 78 percent.

- Gifts — 59 percent.

- Florists — 57 percent.

- Legal services — 51 percent.

- Health/medical — 71 percent.

- Furniture/appliances — 42 percent.

- Entertainment — 54 percent.

- Fitness/recreation — 79 percent.

- Pharmacy/drugstore — 84 percent.

- Clothing/shoes — 59 percent.

- Bank/financial services — 89 percent.

- Insurance — 64 percent.

- Barber/beauty salon — 76 percent.

- Home repair — 60 percent.

- Appliance repair — 56 percent.

- Automotive sales — 26 percent.

- Automotive service — 46 percent.

- Gas station — 84 percent.

Source: ProMatura Group survey.

The dwellings include standard apartments, garden apartments, condominiums, patio homes, duplexes, nursing homes and single-family homes, she said.

Most residents own their dwelling, and 82 percent have paid off their mortgage, she said.

The survey also showed that 98 percent of the residents are satisfied with their homes and 76 percent said they never want to move again, Russ said.

In the 35 years since the first Sun City home was built, housing growth has been accompanied by increased spending by Sun City

See SUN CITY, Page 5

Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz. Thursday, Nov. 11, 1993

# Scholars dig into SC roots

By EVELYN BARBER  
Daily News-Sun columnist

The image of Sun City has remained much the same since its inception in 1960 and the Sun City lifestyle that has evolved is known the world over.

But this is not a static community; in fact, it is in a constant state of change, Arizona Humanities Council Director Dan Shilling said Wednesday, speaking at the annual fall meeting of the Sun Cities Historical Society.

Shilling described the council's "Communities in

Transition" project, which over two years will focus on the understanding of "community" in Arizona.

Sun City is one of 10 archetypal communities that will be part of the project. The 10 were chosen as representative of the five qualities that give Arizona its identity: agriculture, ethnic diversity, high technology, retirement and tourism.

"Sun City, of course, is an international symbol of the planned retirement community," said Shilling.

See Retirees come, A5

"To know history is to know where your ideas come from and why you happen to believe them, to know the source of your moral and aesthetic sensibilities."

— Dan Shilling  
Arizona Humanities Council Director

## Retirees come here to start over

—From A1

A team of five ASU scholars will work with community liaisons, Shilling said, "to research not only the history, but the ideas that underlie the development of the 10 sites" through oral history as well as research in each community.

The project will be concluded in early 1996 and a manuscript for publication will be completed before the summer of 1996.

Shilling cited the rootlessness of America's communities today, the loss of the ability to be a community, as contributing to a poverty of values and to the "collapse of the ritual, ethical and spirit-

ual practices that define a community."

History, he said, contributes directly to community building. "To know history is to know where your ideas come from and why you happen to believe them, to know the source of your moral and aesthetic sensibilities."

Just as Phoenix gets its name from the bird of myth, reborn from its ashes, so many people see their move to Arizona as a chance to start over, Shilling said.

"It is not only those who come searching for jobs that accompany a constantly increasing population; it is also those who retire to places like Sun City — retire, that is, to a

'new life.'"

Arizona cities, like the state itself, have gone through tremendous transitions in the last several decades in order to survive, Shilling said. And it is the "transitioning" the council project will focus on in the 10 communities.

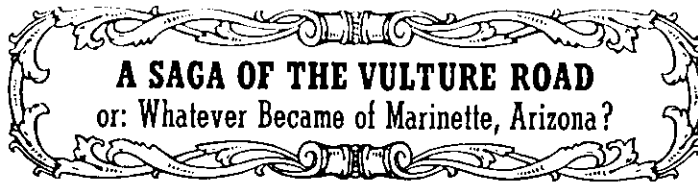
"Communities in Transition" began with the goal of addressing the concerns of community as a deliberative dialogue, not as a "debate" of public policy where participants square off with opposing views that never involve the kind of talk that leads to common ground.

"We are aware that our efforts should not duplicate town halls, city council meet-

ings or similar models. Further, we are not a political or advocacy group, or an organization with answers. We have enough of them," Shilling said.

"Let us encourage open, community-grounded dialogue (rather than debate), dialogue that addresses modern America's tendency to obliterate tradition and make rootlessness a virtue. Let us, instead, reappropriate tradition and nurture the roots that strengthen a community's social ecology, that help ground and locate us in ways no map can."

Evelyn Barber is the former Editorial page editor of the Daily News-Sun.



**A SAGA OF THE VULTURE ROAD**  
or: Whatever Became of Marinette, Arizona?

Grand Avenue generally follows the route taken by the eight-mule teams that hauled freight from Phoenix to Wickenburg in the 19th Century. This desert freighting trail was called the Vulture Road.

In 1863, the German minerologist, Henry Wickenburg was prospecting in the hills overlooking the Hassayampa River. He decided it was time to move on but his little "Arizona Nightingale" (burro) had other ideas. Wickenburg muttered into his grizzled beard, "Maybe a well placed rock will change your mind, or, at least attract your attention!" He let one fly, then another, but both fell short of their mark. He picked up another rock and noticed that it was unusually heavy for its size . . . heavy with gold! As he staked his claim, a lone vulture eyed him from a nearby perch. Thus, the greatest gold discovery in Arizona came to be called the Vulture Mine.

The first town in Maricopa County mushroomed on the west bank of the Hassayampa where arrastras were set up to crush the ore from the Vulture. In October, 1864, this settlement was officially named Wickenburg, Territory of Arizona and by 1866 it was one of the largest cities in Arizona and missed being chosen as the capital by only two votes.

In 1864, John Y. T. Smith set up a hay camp in the Salt River Valley to supply the Cavalry at Camp McDowell. Jack Swilling, a Confederate soldier turned prospector, visited the camp in 1867. The idea of using the prehistoric Hohokam Canal System to support agriculture in the Valley struck Swilling. He organized the Swilling Irrigation Canal Co. and convinced Wickenburg miners to invest in the project which would lower their food and forage prices. Henry Wickenburg "blazed" the 54-mile Vulture Road in 1867, hauling men and supplies to the canals. Within a year wagons laden with produce were rolling to Wickenburg.

Among the canal builders was the English scholar-adventurer-inebriate, "Lord" Darrel Duppa. Commenting upon the ancient ruins and canals in the Salt River Valley, he said, "A city will rise phoenix-like, new and more beautiful

from these ashes of the past." Thus, a gold mine named after a vulture led to the founding, in 1867, of Phoenix, named after the bird which symbolized resurrection in Egyptian mythology.

Other canal companies were established. By 1882, the Grand Canal was supporting a flourishing agricultural industry on the reclaimed desert east of Phoenix. Inspired by this success, the Arizona Canal Co. was formed to construct a waterway from Granite Reef, north of Mesa, to the arid plain west of Phoenix. William J. Murphy, who had just completed a stretch of the Atlantic and Pacific Railway (now the Santa Fe) in northern Arizona agreed to construct the Arizona Canal in exchange for proceeds from any water rights he could sell. He completed the 32-mile waterway and its 20 laterals in 1885 (the work took three years); then headed east to entice Illinois farmers to settle the new 38,000-acre irrigation district.

Delos S. Brown and J. B. Greenhut, wealthy residents of Peoria, Illinois immediately obtained four sections of the newly irrigated land, fourteen miles northwest of Phoenix. Their ranches flanked the Vulture Road, which now carried the tri-weekly stage to Wickenburg. Brown platted 80 acres of his ranch for business and residential lots and named the locality Peoria, in honor of his hometown. The desert freighters soon began stopping at the town well to take on water for the dry trek westward.

In 1894, the Greenhut Ranch was sold to the newly-wed Chauncey Clarke, a handsome young prospector from Peoria, Illinois whose prospects had improved dramatically when he married Maria Rankin, whose father owned the Santa Maria Gold Mine (thirty miles west of Congress). Before moving on to found a ranching and oil barony in California, the Clarkes enlarged the Greenhut ranch house, making it the most imposing residence in the Valley. In July, 1965, its kitchen no longer needed to feed canal crews, railroad gangs and cowboys; its elaborate "general assembly room" better suited for a more gracious era, this handsome Territorial Landmark was demolished to make way for the Wagoner Plaza Shopping Center.

The Arizona climate started to attract winter vacationers from the east in 1896 when "snow birds" started the migration to Castle Hot Springs. There, centuries before, the Tonto Apaches had discovered hot "medicine waters" flow-



ing from a mountainside. The venerable spa operates to this day on the site of the winter residence of the Territorial Governor, 24 miles east of Morrystown.

By 1909, the Vulture Road had become a "grand avenue." The Santa Fe now carried freight to Wickenburg, Flagstaff and points east. The Greenhut-Clarke-Wagoner Ranch was one of the largest shippers of cattle in the Valley. Peoria farmers were prospering. A few of them were beginning to experiment with cotton, a crop the Indians had cultivated by primitive means. The Agua Fria Water and Land Co. was developing 40,000 acres on the west bank of the Agua Fria River. This project was to bring about the construction of Carl Pleasant Dam 18 years later.

It was incredible to think that in 1858, the Congress of the United States had accepted a report about the Arizona desert which said, "The region is altogether valueless. After entering it, there is nothing to do but leave."

R. P. Davie, a business adventurer from Marinette, Wisconsin was impressed by the growth and the potential of the area. He bought and leased thousands of acres between the New River and the Agua Fria and developed a deep well pumping system to irrigate his acreage which lay just beyond the end of the Arizona Canal. Following the example of the founders of Peoria, he platted a townsite named after his home town. Davie envisioned a city of industrious farmers and tradesmen when he wrote, "The men in charge of the destinies of Marinette are master craftsmen when it comes to the making of prosperous communities. We know how to take good soil, good water rights and good climate; get good people there; get the people united and busy. We are doing this at Marinette." Soon Marinette could boast a store, a boarding house and a few homes. The United States Post Office, Marinette, Arizona opened the year that the Territory achieved statehood, 1912.

Davie made his only mistake in 1918 when he gambled the future of Marinette on the sugar beet. By 1920 it was decided that the soil could not produce a sweet enough beet and Davie lost heavily. He sold his holdings May 14, 1920 to the Southwest Cotton Co. (a subsidiary of Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co.) for one million dollars, and the town of Marinette became a company compound. The affairs of Marinette were administered from Litchfield Park, seat of the Goodyear Cotton empire which had been established in 1916

when submarine warfare cut off the supply of long staple cotton from Egypt.

In 1936 the Marinette Ranch was sold to the J. G. Boswell Co., also of Litchfield Park. The Boswells were an old Georgia cotton family. Under this banner Marinette produced as never before, but it produced crops, not people. As machines replaced men in the fields the population of the town dwindled. Finally much of the townsite was planted in cotton and lettuce. Progress had turned Marinette into one of the nation's most prosperous plantations rather than into the city envisioned by its founder.

A newspaper article comparing the Arizona town to Marinette, Wisconsin in the early 1950's said, "Marinette (Arizona) is all but gone now. Progress which built one town from a trading post to a population of 15,000 all but obliterated the other." By 1960, little more remained of the town than the sign on the Santa Fe right-of-way bearing the name, Marinette.

About five miles southwest of Marinette there is a sign on the Luke Air Force Base railroad spur bearing the name "Webb." Webb, Arizona was a construction camp established in 1941 by a young builder from Phoenix when he was awarded the contract to construct Luke Air Field for the U. S. Army Air Force. Since activation in March, 1941, over 18,000 fighter pilots have been trained at Luke, named in honor of Lieutenant Frank Luke, Jr. of Phoenix who, during World War I, was posthumously awarded the first Congressional Medal of Honor in the history of the Air Force. Today Luke Air Force Base provides advanced fighter pilot training for the United States and West Germany. It is the largest facility of its type in the world.

While Del E. Webb was constructing a new community at Luke, he was building an organization that would master the art of community development. This was to have a profound influence upon the history of Marinette where, in 1959, the Boswells released cotton acreage to Webb to build a motel, shopping center, medical clinic, recreational complex with craft shops and art studios and a model home show. Orders were taken for four hundred houses and apartments during the opening month, January, 1960. The history of Marinette began to reverse itself.

Whatever became of Marinette, Arizona? It became Sun City, Arizona - America's Most Famous Resort-Retirement Community.

# Almanac bares nuggets of Arizona

**A** letter from Pamela Marini of Mesa prompts a revival of the *Old Newcomers Almanac*, dispensing basic Arizona lore.

After reading the Aug. 19 column about Grand Avenue, she wrote, "When I studied Arizona history, an instructor told us that Grand Avenue was built to haul goods to the Vulture Mine near Wickenburg. No mention of this was made in your article. I would appreciate your comments concerning this."



**JAMES E.  
COOK**  
Republic  
Columnist

The instructor had the freight wagon before the 20-mule team. Grand was completed in 1888 to open up about 100,000 acres of farmland along the new Arizona Canal in the northwestern part of the Valley.

For 20 years before Grand was built, the meandering Vulture Road led to the mine and points beyond. The mine was there before Phoenix, and partly responsible for the founding of the town.

In the autumn of 1863, Henry Wickenburg found gold nuggets in a range of low mountains west of the Hassayampa River.

Mining legends forbid the finding of gold on purpose. It is said that Wickenburg picked up some rocks to throw at his balky burro and found the rock contained gold. Or did he throw the rocks at some turkey buzzards, which he misnamed vultures?

For whatever reason, he called his find the Vulture Mine. Under various ownerships, it yielded \$17 million in gold during its earliest years. It continued to operate off and on until 1942.

The town of Wickenburg spun off from the Vulture. It was from Wickenburg, in 1867, that farmers of Jack Swilling's irrigation company came to the Salt River Valley. Their earliest grain crops went to feed the mules that powered crude-ore mills at the Vulture.

Another customer was Fort McDowell, northeast of the new settlement. The road from McDowell split near 40th Street and Van Buren, forming "upper" and "lower" roads to Wickenburg. The lower (southernmost) road through the Phoenix settlement became the Vulture Road.

On some old maps of the Glendale area, the Vulture Road was about 1½ miles east of where Grand would be built. Old and new routes converged between Peoria and Marinette (now Sun City).

Besides carrying freight, the Vulture Road was a main stagecoach route to Prescott and California. Freight wagons and stagecoaches dwindled after the Santa Fe, Prescott & Phoenix Railroad was completed in 1895. The place now called Morristown was Vulture Siding on the SFP&P.

## 'Zonie' beats 'Hassayamper'

If you object to being called a "Zonie," as I do, be grateful that Arizonans are no longer called "Hassayampers."

The Hassayampa River heads up south of Prescott and runs to the Gila southwest of Phoenix, passing through Wickenburg. It is said that he who drinks the waters of the Hassayampa will never tell the truth again.

Gold was discovered all along the Hassayampa in 1863. I have found pioneers' letters from the spring of 1864 showing that they already referred to the miners and prospectors there as "Hassayampers."

Before Arizona became a state in 1912, "Hassayamper" appeared in the literature of the Southwest to describe (a) a prospector (2) a liar (3) an incompetent (4) almost any resident of Arizona Territory.

Maybe we can live with "Zonie" until a grown-up word comes along.

## Sun City History

# SUN CITY: 40 YEARS OF SUCCESS!

Del Webb's Vision continues to thrive after four decades

By Bret McKeand  
Independent Newspapers

**J**anuary 1, 1960. Dawn of a new decade and dawn of a new era for retirees.

For it was on that day that the Del E. Webb Development Company began selling homes for its newest project: An active adult retirement community.

The community, called Sun City, was the first of its kind in the nation. The first of its kind in the world, for that matter.

Located west of Phoenix, the new community was the brainchild of the company's founder, Delbert Eugene Webb. Although based in Phoenix, the company was already well-known throughout the nation.

In addition to building many of Arizona's most famous buildings and properties (include Luke Air Force Base), the company had a major hand in building hotels, resorts and casinos in Las Vegas and other parts of the country.

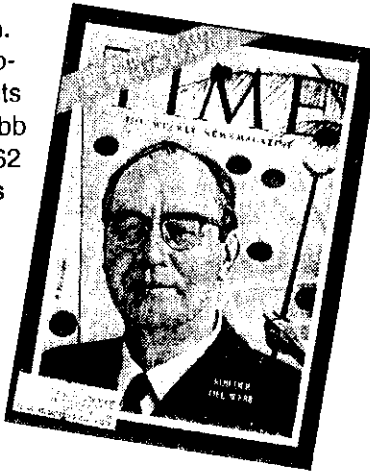
A sports enthusiasts, Del Webb's fame and fortune allowed him to sponsor Indianapolis "500" and Daytona race cars, as well as own the famed New York Yankees for a stretch.

But build an entire community for a specific group of people? That was an entirely new concept altogether.

Spurred on by the early

### National attention.

*Time* magazine profiled Sun City and its founder Del E. Webb in its August 3, 1962 edition. The stories talked about the growing strength of the senior population and referred to Sun City residents as "original settlers."



success of Youngtown, established in 1955, Webb Company officials developed the idea of taking the "retirement" community concept to the next level. Youngtown was created for retirees living on minimal, fixed incomes. The homes were small, the amenities were non-existent.

Del Webb toyed with the idea of creating a self-sustaining community that would be all-encompassing with affordable housing and recreation.

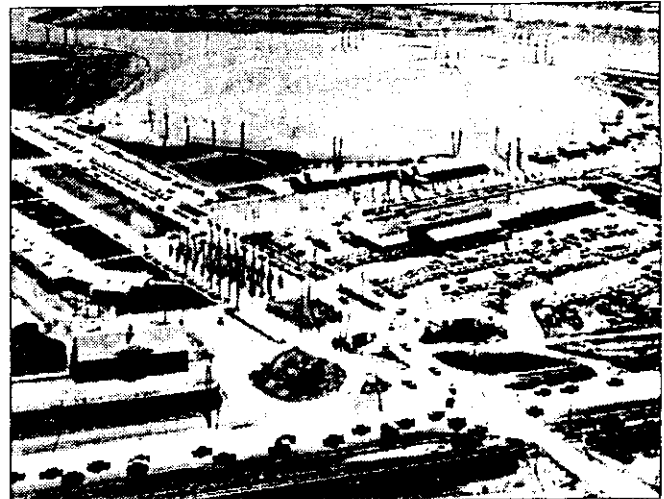
### The work begins

In the late 1950s the company acquired 20,000 acres of land adjacent to Youngtown. The land, owned by the Boswell Company, was part of a town once known as Marinette and used primarily for farming cotton.

In 1959 the Webb Company began work on the then-unnamed community. First to be built was a shopping center, followed by a golf course and a recreation center. That simple pattern — small neighbor-

hoods built close to recreational and shopping amenities — would set the stage for all master-planned retirement communities to follow.

The shopping center — now known as the Grand Shopping Center — was constructed at 107th and Grand avenues. Behind that was the first recreation cen-



Opening weekend 1960. Thousands of curious retirees visited what was then a community of two streets, one shopping center, one rec center and five model homes. Motorists turn left off Grand Avenue on 107th Avenue. At right is the Grand Shopping Center with the model homes and Oakmont Recreation Center behind.

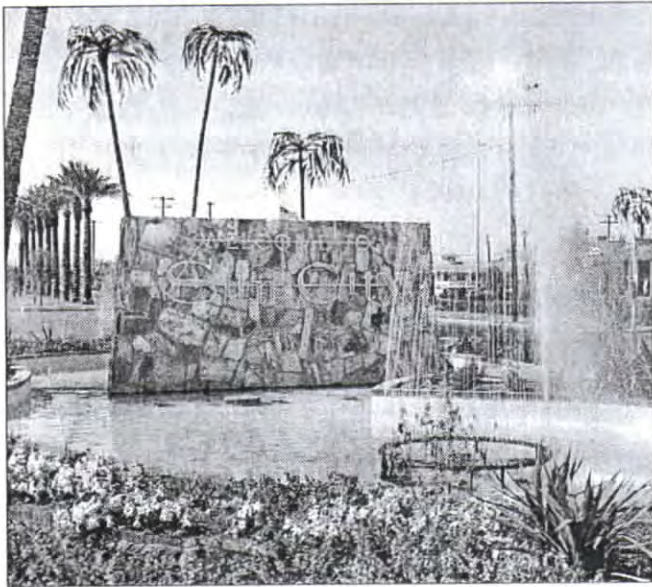
ter — then known as the Civic Association but today called Oakmont — followed by five fresh new model homes. Behind the recreation center was North Golf Course.

The community didn't get its name until about a month prior to its Jan. 1 grand opening. The new project was called the "Marinette Retirement Community" until a new name could be found.

A nationwide contest was held to name the community and, as legend has it, Del Webb himself selected the winning name after seeing it among the thousands of entries.

### Opening day success

Despite a massive nationwide advertising blitz prior to the opening, company officials still had their doubts about the eventual success of their newest project. Would anyone show up on opening day?



File photo

Welcome to Sun City. The intersection of 107th and Grand avenues was once considered the main entrance to Sun City. Above is the original welcoming sign that consisted of a water fountain to greet visitors to the community.

Their fears were quickly calmed. By early morning thousands of cars were lined up along Grand Avenue to view this new creation. A traffic jam starting at 107th Avenue continued east all the way back into the little town of Peoria.

According to Webb records, over 100,000 visitors toured the new model homes during the first three days of the grand opening. Incredibly, 237 homes were sold during that first three-day weekend.

Sun City was an immediate and overwhelming success!

According to the Sun Cities Historical Society, Wendell and Emilie Draser were the first residents to move into their new Sun City home. Records also reveal that many of the first weekend's buyers purchased more than one home at the same time. Others who bought homes that first weekend would go on to buy several more homes in Sun City — changing

homes as the Webb Company changed model styles.

The community grew quickly. By the end of the first month, the company had sold all 400 of the homes scheduled to be built in the first year. A second phase consisting of 675 homes was quickly put together.

The company had planned to sell 1,700 homes



File photo

Recreational amenities — whether it was golf or lawn bowling — played a key role in attracting residents to the new concept of active retirement living.

in its first three years of marketing Sun City. By the end of 1960, a total of 2,000 homes had been purchased.

According to the book, "Jubilee: The 25th Anniversary of Sun City," 59 days after it first opened, Sun City was billed as Arizona's "fastest growing city."

Sun City's initial success earned national attention. The community was highlighted in newspaper and magazine articles throughout the country, featured on the national news and profiled on TV shows. Del Webb was even featured on a 1962 cover of *Time* magazine.

**A friendly community**

The positive publicity showered on the community certainly attributed to its continual popularity, but word of mouth played a key role in Sun City's success. Those who purchased homes after 1960 were often friends of those already living in Sun City. Friends told their friends who in turn told their friends about this new and exciting lifestyle.

Many of the remaining pioneers, in fact, fondly

**Early pioneers:  
Where did  
they come from?**

The following states contributed the most new homebuyers to Sun City in 1960 and 1961:

State	'60	'61
1. Arizona	172	115
2. California	141	146
3. Illinois	90	68
4. Colorado	55	38
5. Minnesota	45	22
6. Ohio	36	37
7. Michigan	33	22
8. Wisconsin	33	18
9. Washington	32	38
10. Iowa	30	32

Source: Jane Freeman, Sun Cities Historical Society

recall how close-knit the community was back in the early 1960s. Friendship, socializing, recreation and fun were — and continue to be — the main staples of living in Sun City.

Various social- and arts-related clubs began to organize. Neighbors and friends gathered at the recreation center to celebrate special occasions and holidays.

Early pioneers recall the first Easter Sunrise Service (a tradition that remains to this day), Chow Night at the rec center, weekly "songfests," newcomer coffees and a minstrel show comprised of residents.

A theater for residents to entertain each other — and to be entertained — began with the construction of the community's second recreation center, Town Hall Recreation Center (known today as Fairway Recreation Center).

The new facility boasted of an outdoor Greek theater. That facility would later be replaced by the Sun Bowl, which would host such big-name stars as Lawrence Welk, Rich Little,

Rosemary Clooney, Guy Lomardo and Bob Hope.

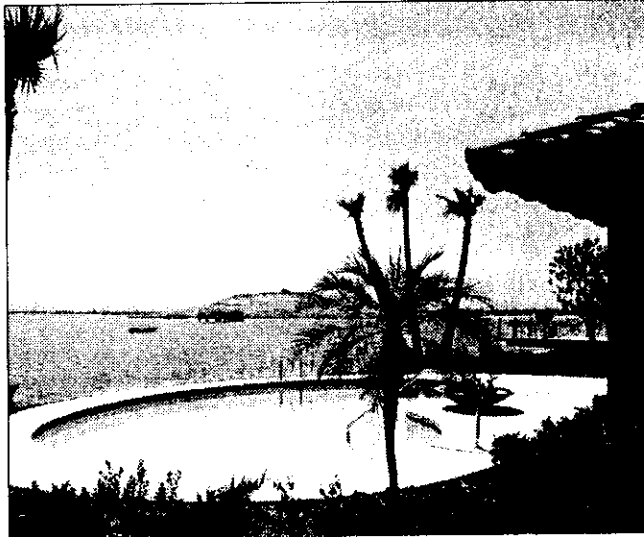
Webb would continue its tradition of building entertainment venues with the massive Sundome Center for Performing Arts once the company began work on Sun City West.

**The community grows**

The Webb Company added recreation centers, golf courses and shopping facilities as Sun City grew.

By 1968, the company had constructed three recreation centers in Sun City: Oakmont, Fairway and the new Mountain View Center. But strange as it may seem today, the three recreation centers were separate entities controlled by three separate boards.

The Del Webb Corporation was quick to turn over ownership of its recreation centers to the residents. But the original recreation centers were assigned to specific units or neighborhoods. At one point, residents living in one Sun City neighborhood



An oasis in the middle of the desert. Viewpoint Lake, with Lookout Mountain and Lakeview Recreation Center off in the distance, under construction in the early 1970s.

were restricted to using one specific recreation center — and prohibited from using another center.

All that changed in 1968 when the community voted to bring all three existing recreational centers under one non-profit organization. That organization would later become the Recreation Centers of Sun City Inc.

The unification also brought about another novel concept that would eventually be adopted by every other builder of master-planned communities: An assessment on all residents to help pay for the recreational amenities.

By the late 1960s the Webb Company began building homes north of Grand Avenue. Lakeview Recreation Center opened in 1970 and within three years the company had begun work on Sundial and Bell Recreation Centers.

A final facility, Marinette Recreation Center, would open in 1979.

**Commercial growth**

As the population grew, so did the need for a variety

of services: Shopping, medical, dining and long-term care.

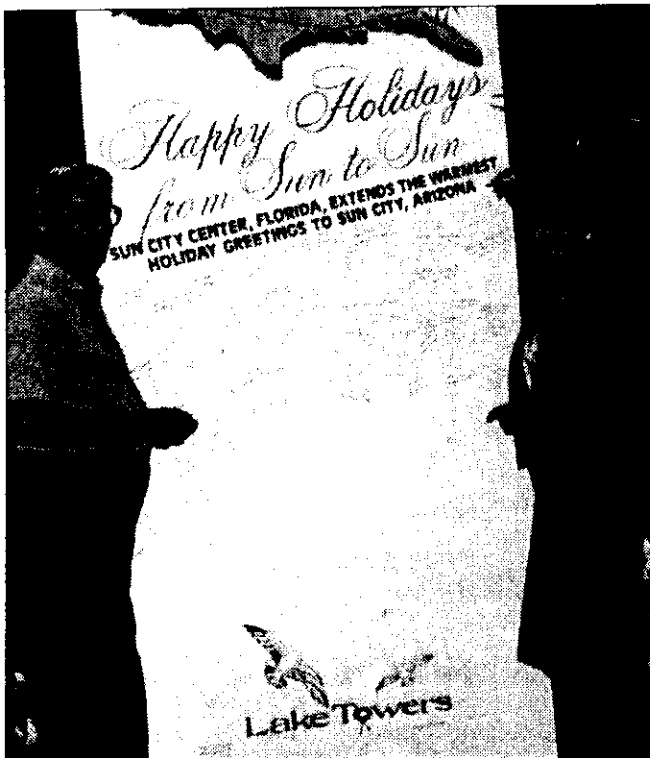
The community's first church was United Church of Sun City. Its first retirement home was Sun Valley Lodge. Its first hotel was the Hiway House, which also served as a restaurant and an apartment for those waiting for their homes to be built (not to mention the Sun City headquarters for Del Webb).

But as the population grew, so did the need for a major health-care facility. The nearest hospital was in Glendale, which was a bit too far for a community consisting entirely of senior citizens.

A committee to examine the idea of building a Sun City hospital was established in 1966. The hospital was originally to be located on the corner of 103rd and Grand avenues (the present site of Sun Valley Lodge).

A community fund drive capped off by a \$1.2 million donation from the James G. Boswell Foundation — named after the man who once owned the land where Sun City now existed — allowed for the creation of Boswell Hospital. Ground was broken in 1969 and the facility's first two towers were opened in 1970.

The success of Sun City prompted the Webb Company to quickly build a Sun City, Calif. and Sun City, Fla. In 1978 the com-



Sun City, Ariz. was the first — but it wasn't the last "Sun City" community built by Del E. Webb. Similar communities quickly followed in California and Florida and later in Tucson, Las Vegas and other parts of the nation. Two of the most successful Sun City "clones" are right here in Maricopa County: Sun City West and Sun City Grand. In a photo taken during the mid-1980s, Sharon Speck of Sun City, Fla. delivers holiday greetings to Robert Knorpp, executive director of the Sun City Chamber of Commerce.

Photo by Bret McKeand/INdependent Newspapers

*over*

pany purchased more land west of Sun City and began working on Sun City West. Since then, additional "Sun City" communities have been created by the Webb Corporation in Arizona, Nevada, Texas, South Carolina and Illinois.

**'City of Volunteers'**

Forty years later, Sun City is still best known for its volunteer spirit.

The community remains unincorporated and has always depended on its own citizens for required services.

Most of the needed health-care services in the community were built with funds donated by residents. Sun Valley Lodge, the community's first retirement home, was and still is primarily funded by resident donations.

The Sun City Prides



In the late 1970s: Sun City and Del Webb officials point to the location of the community's newest health-care facility. The facility would become Royal Oaks Life-Care Community.

keep the streets clean and tidy. The Sheriff's Posse of Sun City helps the Maricopa County Sheriff's patrol the community's streets and plays a major role in maintaining one of

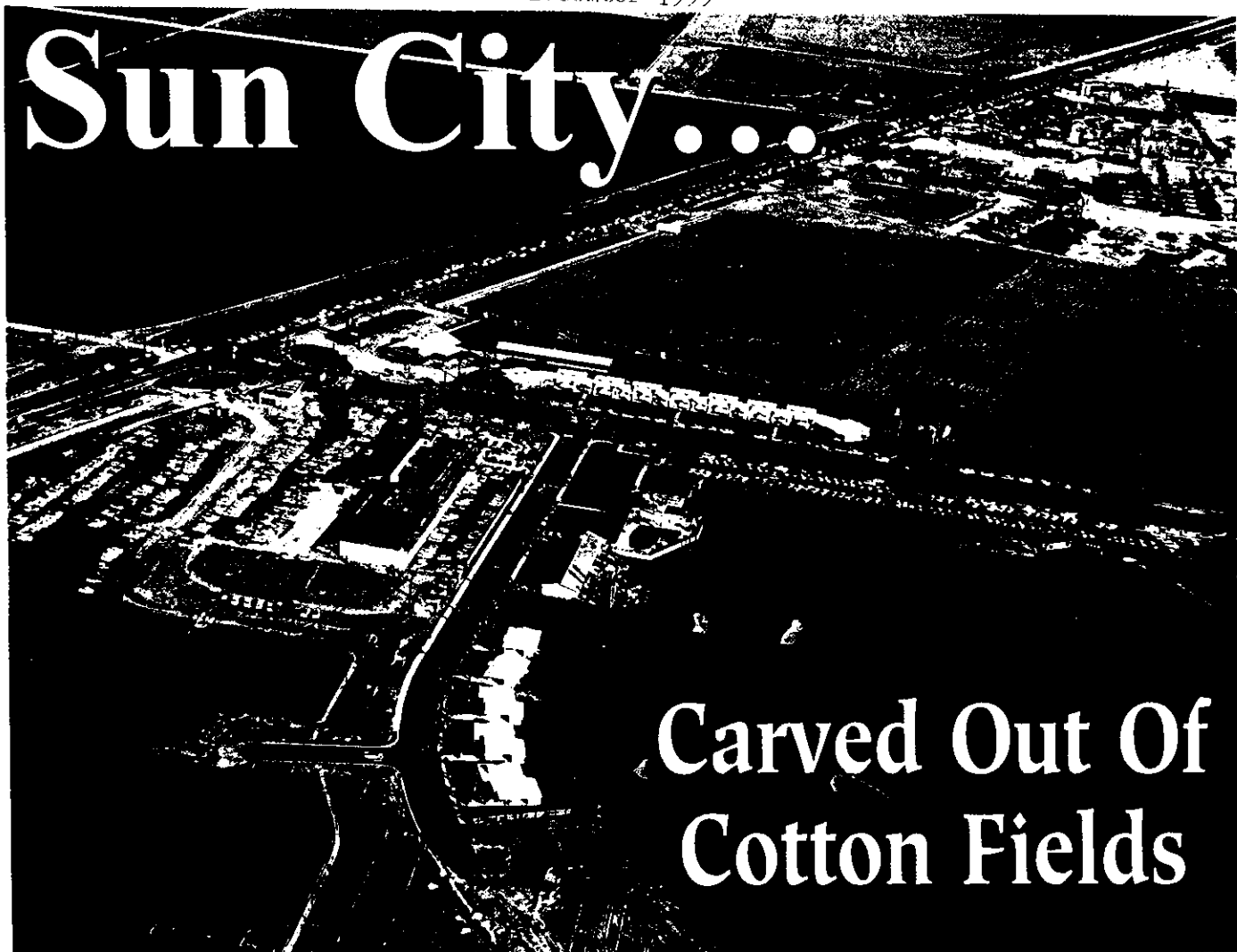
the lowest crime rates in the nation.

Boswell Hospital and its parent, the Sun Health Corp., maintains one of largest volunteer forces in the nation to help with day-

to-day operations, saving the health-care institution millions of dollars each year.

Residents oversee the community's three most important civic groups: The Recreation Centers of Sun City Inc., the Sun City Home Owners Association and the Sun City Taxpayers Association. As other needs for services arose over the years, Sun City residents were quick to organize and find solutions.

Sun and fun may have been the initial attraction to Sun City 40 years ago. But the strength of Sun City's residents and their enduring ability to take care of one another may be the key to the community's continued success — and the primary difference between it and all those since who have tried to imitate Del Webb's vision.



# Sun City...

## Carved Out Of Cotton Fields

**NORTHWEST VALLEY CONSTRUCTION** in late fall, 1959, included pressure-packed days to finish the core of a yet-to-be-named community. Shown above is the Jan. 1960 opening for Sun City (the winning name), which brought larger-than-expected crowds, including a Grand Avenue traffic backup of two miles.

by **Dick Kemp**

It was October 1959, and something was missing from the Phoenix sports pages. Del Webb and his New York Yankees weren't in the World Series, their normal post-season role.

It was, however, not a quiet period for the 59-year-old builder-developer. The Del E. Webb Construction Co. – still several years away from “going public” on the New York Stock Exchange – had been making news in the West.

The firm had recently announced it would build Nevada's tallest building, a 14-story addition to Hotel Sahara,

completed housing at Vandenburg AFB, and reported work for Del Webb's longtime friend, Howard Hughes and the Hughes Aircraft Co.

But now, with less than three months of 1959 remaining, nine holes of golf were being seeded in cotton fields northwest of Phoenix. Other recreation facilities, a shopping center, motel, apartments and a set of model homes were also underway.

Only several months earlier, in June, Webb had announced final agreement with the J. G. Boswell Co. to develop a retirement community on 20,000 acres known

as the Marinette, Santa Fe and Heading ranches.

Suddenly, it became a race, first to get official approval of construction and zoning plans, form sewer and water companies and then to build facilities for a Jan. 1 unveiling.

### Too late to postpone anything

By October, it was too late to postpone anything.

Advertisements – announcing the opening date and offering a new home to the winner of a “Name This Community” contest – had been ordered in *Life*, *Saturday Evening Post* and



**KEY FIGURES** – This photo, taken in 1970, includes, from left: Owen Childress, Del Webb and John Meeker. Owen and John played key Webb roles in opening Sun City on time.

*SUN CITY continued from page 8*

name, selected in mid-December, had to be posted at the Grand Avenue entrance and included in Phoenix newspaper ads announcing the opening.

Model homes were priced from \$8,500 to \$11,300. They included what the company believed was America's only \$9,750 home on a fairway lot.

Finally it was New Year's Eve. John Meeker and Owen Childress finished sprucing up the sales office about 10 p.m., turned to each other and said, almost in unison: "Will anyone come tomorrow?"

**Postscript I** – More than 100,000 visitors attended the three-day opening, at one point backing up traffic on Grand Avenue almost two miles. In 72 hours, 237 homes were sold, exhausting and depleting sales people and company receipts

"At one point, we sent out for a generic receipt book," says Owen Childress, "and asked our vice presidents to pitch in and write contracts.

Even though Arizona Gov. Paul Fannin and Phoenix Mayor Sam Mardian attended the opening, the Arizona Republic didn't realize history was being made and did not assign a reporter.

**Postscript II** – In reliving 1959, John Meeker

today points out that the first Webb contact with the Boswell family was made that February by Vice-President R. H. (Bob) Johnson (later named president and chairman, and after whom a Sun City West boulevard and recreation center are named).

John names L. C. Jacobson as a Webb officer who provided valuable early directions, and talks about the first layout of the new community: "We hired a planner whose first, and last, effort included a number of Venice-like canals."

**Postscript III** – John Meeker – Del Webb's favorite caddy at Phoenix Country Club prior to World War II, and quickly employed by Mr. Webb after John finished his Armed Forces duty – rose to Del E. Webb Development Co. president. Meeker Boulevard in Sun City West is named after him.

Owen Childress, who sold Sun City's first lot in September 1959, to Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Sullivan of Oklahoma City, retired as Del E. Webb Corporation's treasurer and executive vice president/finance.

*Next month: Sun City pioneers relive the spirit and attitude that brought worldwide attention to their new home town.*





The Arizona Republic

Would Sun City work? That was an initial concern, but the Jan. 1, 1960, opening drew about 100,000 people.

# Marketing put Sun City in limelight

Today, popular culture holds a special place for Sun City. Just hearing the name of the community invokes images of smiling retirees sailing by in lavish golf carts.

Developer Del E. Webb carved out Sun City 12 miles northwest of Phoenix, transforming 20,000 acres of cotton fields, sagebrush and mesquite into a housing community designed for active retirement.

It proved to be a model for success. The Webb corporation has opened several similar retirement developments in Arizona and other states.

On Jan. 1, the original Sun City celebrates its 40th anniversary. Some never dreamed it would be a hit.

One story has it that on the eve of the community's grand opening, a couple Del E. Webb Corp. employees headed for a pub to mull over what might happen that next day — Jan. 1, 1960.

While staring into his drink, one man wondered, "Do you think anyone will show up?" The other man shrugged his shoulders and said, "And if they do, how am I going to sell a 30-year mortgage to a 60-year-old retiree?"

They shouldn't have worried. The following day, about 100,000 people flocked to the northwest Valley site to satisfy their curiosity about a place that would house only senior citizens. During the next few days,

—Please see WEBB, Page 8

— WEBB, from Page 1

237 people signed purchase contracts for the \$8,500 to \$11,750 masonry homes.

Cars were nearly bumper to bumper driving into the development; the lure was too great to resist. This wasn't simply a new home to buy, it was a new lifestyle to buy into. Del Webb was marketing a new product: active retirement living.

A year before the opening, Webb conducted a national campaign focusing heavily on the cold, snowy regions of America. Visitors were invited to Sun City's grand opening. Full-page ads in newspapers and magazines promised "An Active Way of Life" for the new residents. Put away the rocking chair, Webb officials urged, and take up a golf club.

Sun City was to be the place to be as young as you feel. In Webb's glossy brochures, retirees wore broad smiles and engaged in various manner of outdoor and indoor recreation. One of the first model home brochures carried this line: "In Sun City, you will enjoy complete individuality, privacy and happy, satisfying living, and most important: the right to do what you want . . . when you want . . . to live exactly as you wish."

Retirees had found their niche. It was a chance to enjoy the retirement years with one's peers. Who better to have as a neighbor than someone who understood the rigors of the Depression or the anxiety of waiting for your sweetheart to return from World War II? Who better to have as a neighbor than someone who was proud of America?

And so the retirees came, settling into the clean, two-bedroom homes that flanked golf courses or graced the palm tree-lined streets.

For many of the retirees, life was great.

The peace of the community has been shaken by controversy over the years. One of the most public battles involved school financing.

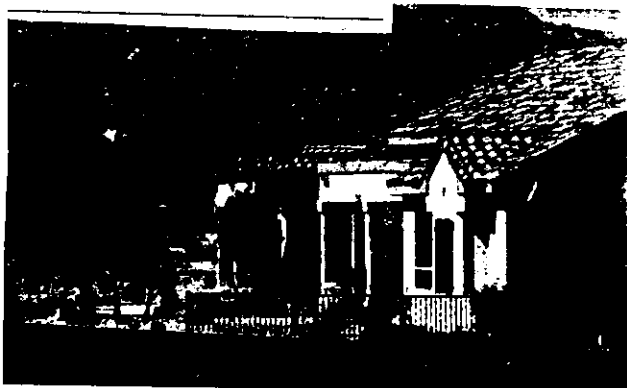
Although Sun City did not include elementary and secondary schools, the community was within the boundaries of the Peoria Unified School District.

For 14 years, Sun City residents argued over supporting the school district. They made their views public, voting against — and successfully ensuring non-passage — of 17 bond issues that Peoria Unified attempted to pass from 1962 to 1974. Eventually, the retirement community was allowed to be dropped from the school district's tax rolls.

Incorporation has been another hot topic during the past 40 years and has caused bitterness between friends and even spouses. Although passionately debated over the years, the community remains part of Maricopa County.

One aspect that has never died in Sun City is the faithfulness of residents helping others, either by opening their wallets or being a volunteer. Many Sun City residents have donated thousands of hours volunteering in school districts and with various agencies.

OVER



Tom Tingle/The Arizona Republic

Sun City Grand is one of the developments expected to push population of the city of Surprise to 85,000 in the coming decade.



The Arizona Republic

Arizona State University's Sundome Center for the Performing Arts draws people from throughout the state to Sun City West, but the community's other attractions, including golf, beckon senior citizens to retire there.

## Sun City West refines the Del Webb model

After the Del Webb Corp. finished work on Sun City 21 years ago, the Phoenix developer moved to available land just two miles west to create a similar community — Sun City West.

The 30,000-resident retirement community is an upscale, master-planned development designed as an active, adult community where senior citizens do a lot of golfing, swimming and socializing. Some residents retired early from top

positions at the country's largest companies.

Newcomers are lured to Sun City West by the lifestyle and \$70 million worth of recreational facilities and golf courses, not to mention hundreds of clubs and civic organizations. Arizona State University's Sundome Center for the Performing Arts draws people from throughout the state for an assortment of entertainment.

Sun City West differs from Sun

City in that it offers higher-priced homes. Also, its businesses are concentrated in a commercial core instead of being spread among several shopping centers, as in Sun City.

Webb sold its last home in Sun City West in mid-1998 after building more than 16,000 homes in the 7,100-acre development. From 1,000 square feet to over 3,000

— Please see **FURTHER**, Page 8

— **FURTHER**, from Page 1

square feet, there is a variety of single-family homes, town homes, and duplexes. A wide range of lots is available, from small lots to golf course or lake lots.

Webb officials say there is talk about expanding Sun City West again. Webb is negotiating to buy 638 acres of land, known as Pleasant Valley Ranch, northeast of Sun City West.

Home prices range from \$80,000

to \$300,000 and higher. One resident of each housing unit must be 55 or older.

Since Sun City West is an unincorporated part of Maricopa County, the volunteer Property Owners and Residents Association provides local information services, investigates deed restrictions and acts as an advocate for residents on government and political issues affecting the community. The Ambassadors of Sun City West, a PORA subsidiary, promotes the

community among potential homeowners.

Sun City West residents have built an enviable reputation for helping others in their own and nearby communities. They volunteer at schools, food banks and hospitals. Hundreds of volunteer members serve in the nationally renowned Sheriff's Posse, which helps with public-safety services, and the Sun City West prides, whose members keep the landscaped medians clean and trimmed.

over

A6 Wednesday, June 25, 1997

Daily News-Sun

# Trolleys traversed Sun City

In the early growing years of Sun City, public transportation was viewed more as a novelty than the necessity it has become for many of our residents who have given up driving.

In 1963, Del Webb put a trolley on the streets called the "Shop-Lifter." It carried residents and visitors from the Grand Shopping Center to stops around the neighborhood.

The Shop-Lifter was a 25-seat capacity open trailer, pulled by a Jeep. It was custom built, patterned after similar conveyances seen at such places as Disneyland. It was equipped with seats covered in all weather washable plastic and roofed over completely with a colorfully striped canvas canopy to afford passengers protection from the elements. The conveyance was equipped with passenger signals to indicate stops.

The Shop-Lifter was discontinued after two years.

At a meeting of the Sun City Merchants Association on Dec. 12, 1965, bus line operator Arthur Lambert of Youngtown announced bus service would start in January. Soon a gleaming red and white, 18-seat "mini-bus" appeared on the scene. The bus was owned by DEVCO but leased to Lambert who had the bus franchise in Sun City.

Lambert said at the time, "The bus will make the rounds of Sun City every hour from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. six days a week. If there are enough requests we will do a Sunday run."

Bus signs were to be erected every 1,200 feet along the streets. Monthly tickets were \$2; a single ride anywhere in town cost 25 cents.

DOWN

MEMORY

LANE

In 1969 the popular van was replaced by a new and larger Bluebird bus freshly painted in Sun City colors and sunburst. It had tinted windows, a chime system for disembarking passengers, 34-inch-wide plush seats and stainless steel handrails.

Sun Valley Lodge nurse, Margaret Steffek, the first person to climb on board the new bus, was given a lifetime pass. Mrs. Steffek would walk one-half mile to board the bus at 107th and Peoria avenues to ride to her job at the lodge.

Bus driver Tony Far brightened the already colorful bus with his cheerfulness, and passengers could count on him for a smile as he helped them on and off with their packages. Far occasionally strayed from the designated route to drop a handicapped passenger off at his or her door.

Although the buses were vital for those who needed transportation, there were enough riders to make it a profitable operation. DEVCO had been subsidizing the service and with the company phasing out in Sun City, the bus service was stopped on June 30, 1982.

The Red Cross and Easter Seal Society operated vans for persons with medical appointments and for shoppers only when space permitted.

In the meantime Del Webb contracted the Molley Corp. of Scottsdale to initiate the Molley Trolley for a five-month period. The Molley Trolley was an open air vehicle, a colorful replica of late 1800's streetcars.

Two trolleys, "Molly" and "Dolly" gave residents free shuttles between shopping centers and businesses every 30 minutes from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays. Cost of the service was borne by merchants who bought advertising on the sides of the trolleys.

The trolley service stopped for the summer after a five-months run, and was intermittent thereafter until it was eventually ended.

In May 1982, the Sun Cities Area Transit System (SCAT) adopted articles of incorporation and started service in September 1982.

*From the files of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.*

## COMMUNITY PROFILE: SUN CITY

# SUN CITY: NATION'S MOST FAMOUS RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

**S**un City, a master-planned retirement community established and built by the Del Webb Corp., is the largest retirement community in the nation.

The community, which opened in January 1960, is world-famous for its active, resort retirement lifestyle and has set the standard for other active adults communities to follow.

Sun-City is self-contained with many shopping centers and restaurants offering a wide variety of stores and services. The town is unincorporated and depends upon Maricopa County for services such as law enforcement, street repairs and zoning protection.

Eleven golf courses and seven recreation centers in Sun City provide swimming, tennis, bowling and a myriad of other activities. The Lakeview Recreation Center even has a lake for fishing.

Volunteers are a mainstay in Sun City and the community is known as the "City of Volunteers."

The Sun City Prides is a nonprofit corporation which assists Maricopa County in keeping Sun City clean. The Prides is comprised of more than 300 members who are easily recognizable by their orange safety jackets. Public donations are used by the Prides to purchase tools and equipment to maintain the beauty of 217 miles of streets and medians in the community.

Police protection is provided by the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, augmented by members of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City — men and women who volunteer their services 24 hours a day. The Posse's primary objective is to prevent crime through neighborhood watch, operation identification, vacation watch, funeral watch, traffic control, search and rescue and home security survey



### Sun City Profile

**Founded:** 1960

**Status:** Unincorporated

**Government:** Maricopa County

**District 4 County Supervisor:** Ed King

**Population:** 45,000

**Restrictions:** One member of household must be 55 years of age; no one under 18 allowed.

**Important civic organizations:**

Sun City Home Owners (deed restrictions, zoning matters, transportation issues, consumer services), 10401 W. Coggins Drive, 974-4718.

Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc. (recreation properties), 876-3000.

Sun City Taxpayers Association (taxes, utility rates), 12630 N. 103rd Ave., 933-7530.

programs.

A number of civic organizations have assumed the responsibility of keeping an eye over issues that affect the community. The Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc., a private corporation, is responsible for recreational

amenities in Sun City; the Sun City Home Owners Association works with county and state agencies on such issues as zoning and transportation; the Sun City Taxpayers Association keeps a close watch on such issues as taxes and utility rates.

# Living in Sun City

## Community shows no signs of aging

By **Barbara Deters** / Staff writer

**W**hat started out as a partnership between developer Del E. Webb and farmer J.G. Boswell has turned into a way of life for retirees — the Sun Cities.

Del Webb opened his first Sun City retirement development 12 miles northwest of Phoenix, on New Year's Day 1960 with a three-bedroom, two-bath house selling for \$11,300. The development was deemed an instant success, with 237 houses selling in the first three days.

Today, there are 10 Sun City communities in the United States designed for people 55 and older.

And the original Sun City, which is 36 years old, continues to draw retirees from throughout the world.

Sun City is known for the active lifestyle of its senior citizens. There are more than 350 clubs and civic organizations and seven recreation centers. Census figures from 1995 show the community has 38,037 residents. Others say there are lots more people around. The community's Recreation Centers — all residents must belong — have 43,000 members.

Sun City has been called a golfer's paradise. The unincorporated community encompasses 8,900 acres, 1,200 of which are golf courses. Golf links wind throughout the community, creating large green open spaces.

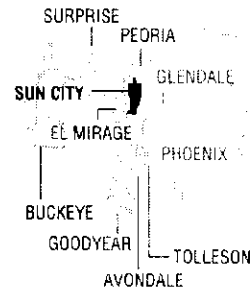
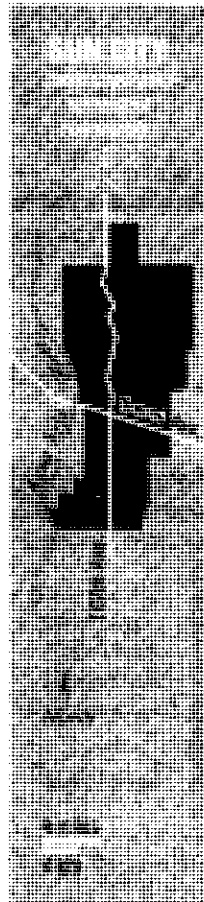
There's a broad range of community facilities, including seven recreation centers that provide swimming, tennis, and arts and crafts; two libraries; two bowling centers; eight golf courses; three country clubs; an art museum; and a symphony orchestra.

Community members are big supporters of Sun Health, Sun City's largest employer, with 2,000 jobs. Sun Health operates the Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital in Sun City, and the Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital in Sun City West, and the Sun Health Research Institute.



Nancy Engebretson / Staff photographer

Since it opened on New Year's Day 1960, Sun City has been the model for retirement communities. Now, Del Webb is building Sun City Grand, which will begin selling homes next month and open after the first of the year.



**1995 population:** 38,037;  
increase since 1990: 0%  
**1995 number of homes:** 26,828;  
**Median home value:** \$73,000  
**Median monthly rent:** \$491  
**% of homes owned/rented:** 93/7  
**Avg. commute time to downtown Phoenix:** 30 minutes  
**Median age:** 74.5  
**Median household income:** \$25,714  
**Est. 1995 property tax rate per \$100 assessed valuation:** \$4.86  
**Local landmark:**  
Sun Cities Art Museum  
**Top elected official:** Margery Greenhalge, president of Sun City Home Owners Association


**APRIL 24, 1996**

# Lizards, rattlesnakes, cotton

## Buckeye man explains life in SC before Webb

By JOHN S. WOLFE  
Independent Newspapers

If there was one place Abe Harris didn't want his truck to break down, it was "Lizard Acres."

Located at the end of Dysart Road, it was right in desert.

"You'd see lizards running all over the place," he recalls.

That was the Sun Cities before the Sun Cities, a rather bustling mixture of cotton fields, feed lots, cattle farms and migrant workers.

It was Abe Harris' life from the time he was 6, the softspoken man with a preacher's presence told members of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society last Thursday afternoon.

He came to Arizona from Crockett, Texas, with his family, one story among the thousands of families brought here by truck to work cotton fields and then returned home.

By the early 1940s, his mother had tired of the trip, and told her family they were going to stay put.

They lived outside the city limits of Buckeye, where minorities were forced to live, and worked. The workers thinning cotton in the Valley were paid by the acre. For most a 10-hour day brought \$4, he says.

Mr. Harris, 59, recalls heading to the fields after school and on Saturdays.

"That's what we knew how to do, that's what we were expected to do, and that's what we had to do," he says.

He started hauling hay when he was 12.

When his stepfather was able to build a camp for laborers, Mr. Harris soon had the opportunity to haul maize out of what is now Sun City to area feed lots.

"I would do anything to stop chucking cotton," he says with a smile.

Still, it was hard life, he says.

"My upbringing instilled things in me as a kid that I swore if I ever got grown, things that I wouldn't do," he says. "Like I wouldn't move, and I would build me a house."

He says he chuckles when he hears builders talk about their problems putting golf courses in the

When Webb began building Sun City, "It was the most exciting thing I saw in my life," recalls Abe Harris. He was impressed with how different teams went from house to house pouring floors or doing framing or other tasks.

desert.

"Back then we had problems, too," he says. "We were killing 26 rattlers a day at Gila Bend. The problem was so bad that kids weren't allowed to go into the fields."

In the '50s you could have never dreamt that there wouldn't be anything other than what there had been here, he says.

When Webb began building Sun City, "It was the most exciting thing I saw in my life," he recalls.

Mr. Harris knew a lot of the people who worked on Webb's project and he was impressed with how different teams went from house to house pouring floors or doing framing or other tasks.

May 3, 1965 was the last day he worked in the fields.

He joined a job training program that created opportunities for migrant workers. That led to positions with the first health maintenance organization in Phoenix, the county's Community Action Program, and an energy company.

He is now director of the employment and training program for displaced workers on the west side of Maricopa County. He is also a member of the county's planning

commission.

Because Mr. Harris, a bishop at Mount Zion Holy Spiritual Church in Buckeye, has worked with young people for much of his life, he was asked why things seem so out of control today.

"The people who represent examples don't have any moral values," he says unapologetically.

Parents should follow the Bible and teach their young to be obedient and to be courteous to others.

"I believe that has gone out the window," he says. "If there is no discipline in the home, children are going to take that same attitude to their job, to school, and to the streets.

"If we don't discipline these kids, they're going to start disciplining us," he says pointedly.

He has a deep appreciation for the people of the community.

"Sun City came to our rescue in the mid-1960s," he says. "We used to have a daycare center in Avondale and Sun City volunteers would come and help us out."

He hopes that tradition continues.

"Many people are looking to you to share your wisdom and expertise," he says.

# Sun City included in study of Arizona towns

## Retirement community one of five cities chosen for project

By LLOYD D. BROWN  
Sun Cities Independent

251-95

The changing face of Arizona communities, including Sun City's, will be the focus of a two-year study by the Arizona Humanities Council.

The council last month received an \$85,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to conduct a study of the history of five Arizona towns, including Sun City, Bisbee, Page,

Payson, and Yuma.

The idea for the project, titled "Voices from Communities in Transition," grew out of the 1992 Los Angeles riots, according to council Executive Director Dan Shilling.

"We were interested in the fact that we don't seem to be able to talk to each other anymore," says Mr. Shilling.

Mr. Shilling says Arizona is a great place to study communities because most of the state's towns

are relatively new, many include mostly transient residents and all are communities in transition.

But rather than just a history of the five towns, Mr. Shilling says the project will focus on people's perceptions of their communities.

"If a community experiences all of this change, how does it retain its sense of community?" says Mr. Shilling.

Sun City was selected to participate in the project because "it represents a very specific kind of com-

munity in the Southwest," Mr. Shilling says.

The project will include three parts, including a collection of oral histories, reading programs and a lecture series. Mr. Shilling says the project could result in a book.

The lecture series, scheduled to begin this summer, will be held in Phoenix, and will include some of the most noted experts on the development of communities. Mr. Shilling says the series will be free and open to the public.

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*"We were interested in the fact that we don't seem to be able to talk to each other anymore."*

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The project's oral histories will be collected through early 1996, and project officials are looking for possible interview candidates.

Sun City residents interested in knowing more about the project, or interested in participating, can contact Mr. Shilling at 257-0355.

Daily News-Sun

# Study profiles Sun City

By MICHAEL P. HEGARTY  
Staff writer

SUN CITY — The communities of Arizona are as diverse as its landscapes: Desert saguaros grace the Valley, snow caps the northern mountaintops, and old mining shacks dot the southern part of the state.

But how much do the communities have in common?

That's what the Arizona Humanities Council will study during the next two years.

Sun City has been chosen as one of five Arizona cities to participate in the project, funded by an \$84,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

"This project is not just about history; there have been a lot of those," said Dan Shilling, executive director of Arizona Humanities Council. "Our approach is the development and evolution of the community from a different perspective. There are so many different communities, with Sun City being very different than most."

"This is an attempt to come to the sense of what we mean by the community. We read so much about wanting to get back to a community. What do we mean by that? The 1950s white picket fence, or the community where people can work and participate in the community?"

The other cities in the project are Bisbee, Page, Payson and Yuma.

"It's going to be interesting in comparing with the other four communities," said Jane Freeman, archivist for the Sun Cities Historical Society.

The communities were chosen by the humanities council because of their diversity and individuality, Shilling said.

"They are all very different," he said. "Some are older, others younger, large and small."

The project will involve oral histories of the communities conducted by scholars going into the different areas, library readings followed by a discussion period, and a lecture

► See Project depends, A5

## ■ From A1

series.

A book will be compiled at the end of the project.

"It won't just be one-on-one, but a lot of community input," Shilling said.

Anyone interested in participating in the project may call the humanities council at 257-0335.

"We're going to bring the findings to the community as we find them," Shilling said. "We hope to keep the community involved throughout the two years."

The reading programs will be open to the public, with authors of books about building a sense of community discussing their works.

Scheduled to participate are Robert Bellah, author of the New York Times best seller "Habits of the Heart," and Benjamin Babrer, author of "Strong Democracy."

The books focus on the role of churches, schools, government and businesses in the community.

"Each book looks at a way to build community," Shilling said. "What we want people to do in the reading programs is get to talking about how do these academic scholarly approaches really work in the real world. How do they really show up in Sun City or Page? People start thinking about their community history and values. When they say 'Sun City' what do they mean?"



Daily News-Sun, Sun City, Ariz. Thursday, Nov. 11, 1993

# Scholars dig into SC roots

by EVELYN BARBER  
Daily News-Sun columnist

The image of Sun City has remained much the same since its inception in 1960 and the Sun City lifestyle that has evolved is known the world over.

But this is not a static community; in fact, it is in a constant state of change, Arizona Humanities Council Director Dan Shilling said Wednesday, speaking at the annual fall meeting of the Sun Cities Historical Society.

Shilling described the council's "Communities in

Transition" project, which over two years will focus on the understanding of "community" in Arizona.

Sun City is one of 10 archetypal communities that will be part of the project. The 10 were chosen as representative of the five qualities that give Arizona its identity: agriculture, ethnic diversity, high technology, retirement and tourism.

"Sun City, of course, is an international symbol of the planned retirement community," said Shilling.

See Retirees come, A5

'new life.' "

Arizona cities, like the state itself, have gone through tremendous transitions in the last several decades in order to survive, Shilling said. And it is the "transitioning" the council project will focus on in the 10 communities.

"Communities in Transition" began with the goal of addressing the concerns of community as a deliberative dialogue, not as a "debate" of public policy where participants square off with opposing views that never involve the kind of talk that leads to common ground.

"We are aware that our efforts should not duplicate town halls, city council meet-

ings or similar models. Further, we are not a political or advocacy group, or an organization with answers. We have enough of them," Shilling said.

"Let us encourage open, community-grounded dialogue (rather than debate), dialogue that addresses modern America's tendency to obliterate tradition and make rootlessness a virtue. Let us, instead, reappropriate tradition and nurture the roots that strengthen a community's social ecology, that help ground and locate us in ways no map can."

*Evelyn Barber is the former Editorial page editor of the Daily News-Sun.*

# Looking back

## First Webb building superintendent recalls Sun City's early beginnings

Once Del Webb started work on Sun City, the construction crews never looked back —

And the face of the Northwest Valley changed, almost overnight.

Tom Gilbreath, who was Webb's first construction superintendent in Sun City, started work in 1959, preparing for the Opening Day, Jan. 1, 1960.

At that time construction men were working on, but hadn't completed, the Grand Center shops, the Safeway store and the Highway House.

Construction of the model houses and the apartments behind the Highway House was continuing, as well.

"Del Webb spent \$1 million in Sun City before any houses were sold," says Mr. Gilbreath. "Across in Youngtown, you couldn't even buy a hamburger."

Some 300 to 400 houses were sold on opening day. Mr. Gilbreath recalls the long lines of people waiting to see the homes.

"We started with six models, the cheapest was under \$10,000 and the highest price was \$15,000."

"Now, there are 21 models, in Sun City West.

"A lot of the home sales were done by mail — just like buying a house out of the Montgomery Ward catalog."

He recalls a shopper talking to an "oldtimer," who was looking out on the houses that were going up.

"I remember when that was nothing but a cotton field," the oldtimer said.

"Really? When was that?"

"Two days ago."

Mr. Gilbreath says the construction force, numbering nearly 600 workers, was on a roll. "We did eight houses, complete, and four apartments, per day."

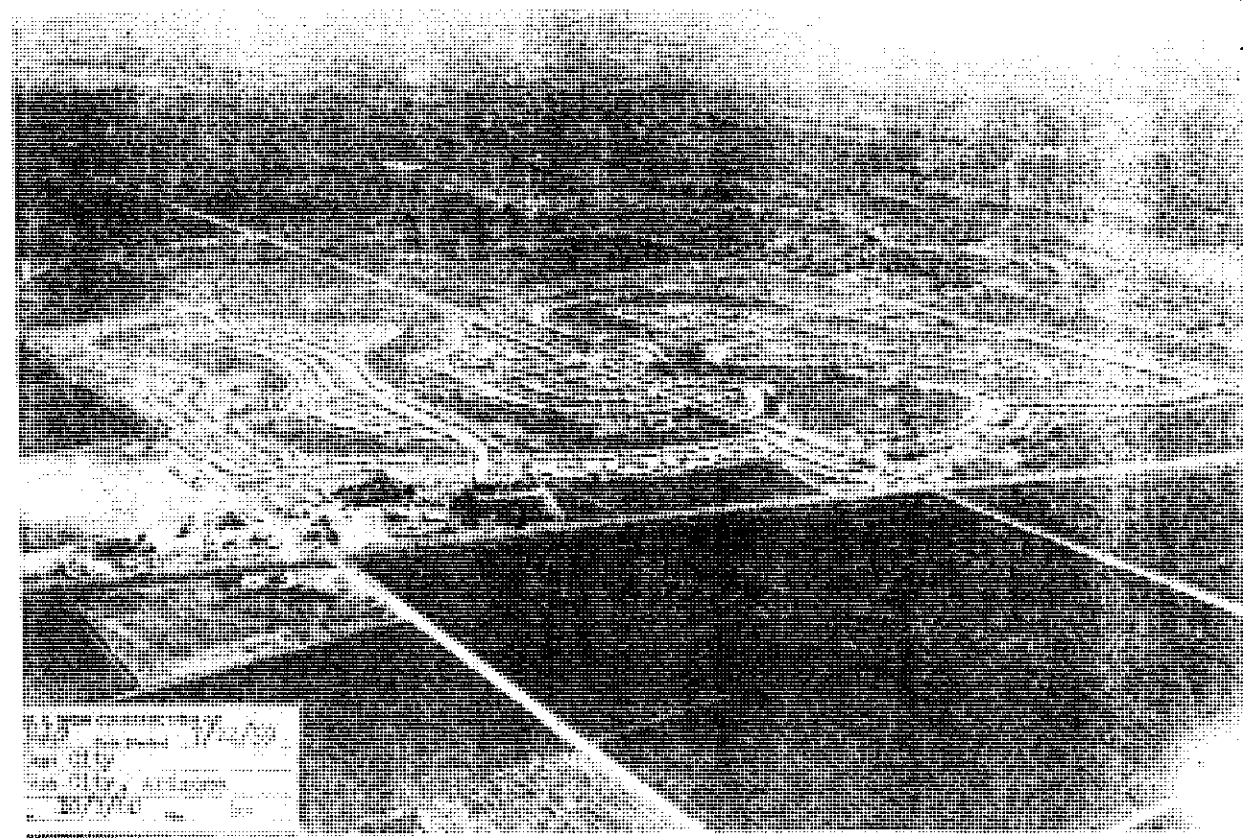
The work orders were simple. "That meant we had to be working on 260 houses, altogether, in order to finish eight per day — and half that many apartments.

"We'd dig footings one day, pour concrete the next, put down the foundations, rough in the plumbing, then pour the slabs, right on to turning the key."

Subcontractors were hired for everything except the concrete work, says Mr. Gilbreath. Webb did the concrete work for the project.

The construction started with all-masonry exterior walls. "There were all the masons you could think of," says Mr. Gilbreath. "After I left, the masons went on strike, and while they were out, the supervi-

**THE WAY WE WERE.** Sun City (right) as it appeared in the summer of 1959, five months before it officially opened. Below, Webb officials discuss plans for the Highway House Motel and Restaurant. It was not uncommon for new residents to live at the motel until their new Sun City homes were completed. The Highway House later became the King's Inn Hotel and was recently torn down to make room for Smith's Food and Drug Store.



sors decided they could do without them. They went to an all-frame construction.

"They had to do something — people had to eat."

Webb bought construction material in by the train load, he recalls, with the trains delivering the orders to a railway siding on 98th Avenue.

As general supervisor, Mr. Gilbreath had two assistant supervisors, each with a foreman in the field, for each phase of the work.

There were Veterans Administration and Federal Housing Administration inspectors assigned almost full-time to the work, as well.

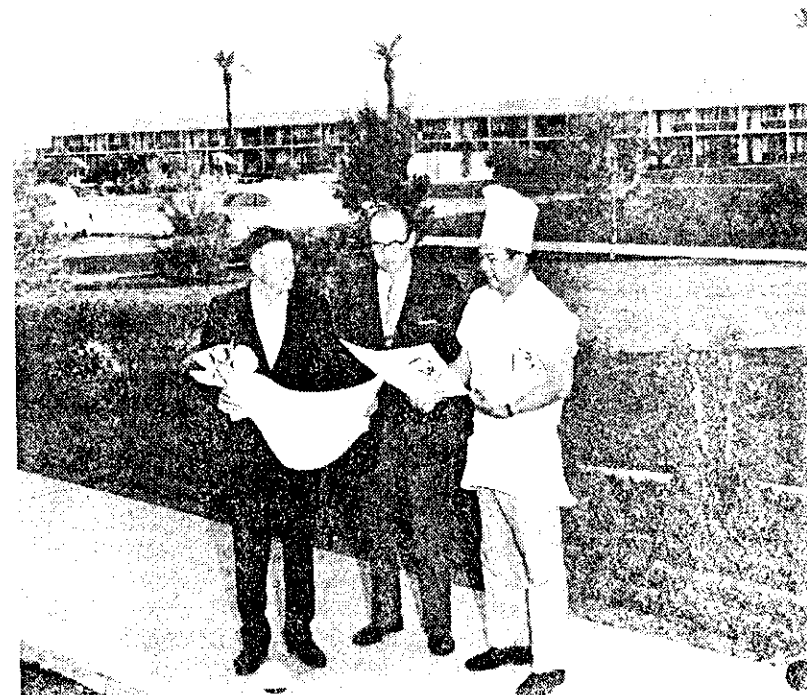
"We had to use two-way radios with a central station. It's commonplace now, but was something new in 1960."

Mr. Gilbreath stayed with the Sun City project until the building crews had finished 5,000 units. He then transferred out to Sun City, Calif., where he worked for about two years.

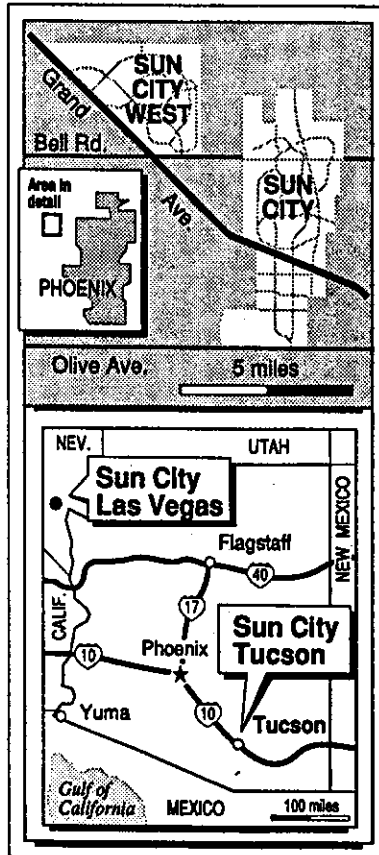
There were other jobs and projects to occupy his attention, in Western and Midwestern states.

"Finally, I got tired of running around and came back to Arizona where I had kept my home," he says.

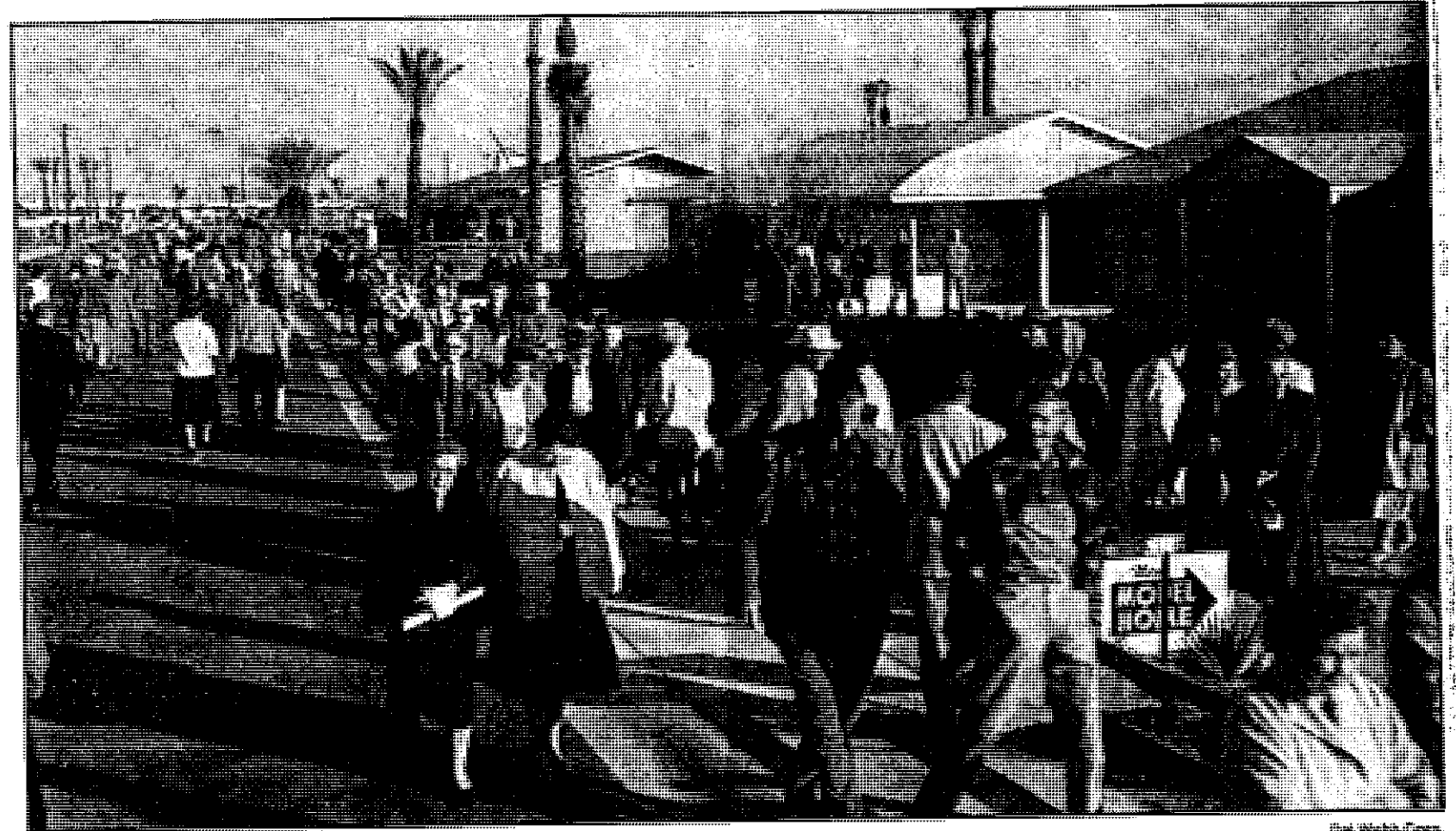
Construction jobs around the Valley kept him busy for a while, before he retired about eight years ago.



# Sun City ages well in 30 years



The Arizona Republic



Bob Wickham/Corbis

It was a modern-day land rush when Sun City opened in 1960. During that weekend, more than 100,000 inquisitive people visited, and 237 homes were sold.

## 225 'pioneers' still live in 'a real fun community'

### 1st house built in development now a museum

By Jeff Nies  
Arizona Republic Correspondent

From the outside, the white, two-bedroom house at 10801 Oakmont Ave. seems an unassuming landmark for a cultural revolution led by Sun City developer Del E. Webb.

Sun City's first official residence has a single carport, desert landscaping and a backyard view of the 154-acre front nine of the 72-par North Golf Course.

Although she has never lived in the home, Vera Jean Painter is very much a part of its history.

Painter, owner of Jean's Sportogs, 12801 W. Bell Road, bought it in 1984 for \$50,000 from the family of the original owner, Denver motel builder John McDonald. He and, in turn, each of his two wives, occupied it for 24 years.

"I just thought it would be nice to own the first home in Sun City," Painter said.

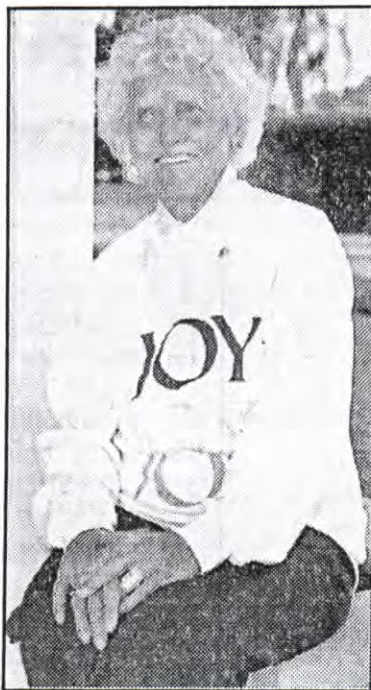
At the time, "I also had (my) business at (Grand Center) on the corner of Grand Avenue and 107th Avenue. It was right across the street from the back door of my store."

Painter rented out the house while she owned it, never spending a single night there herself. She once considered moving her 94-year-old mother into it, but never did.

Last spring, she sold her piece of local history to the Sun Cities Area Historical Society for \$44,000.

"I sold it at a loss, but I felt like I made a donation to the Historical Society," she said.

Historical Society founders Jane Freeman and Glen Sandberg are grateful the property is now available for display and use as a local museum. It will be open to the



Michael Ging/The Arizona Republic  
Mildred Toldrian, 82, is a pioneer of Sun City. When she and her now-deceased husband saw the community, "we were just amazed," she said. "We fell in love with it."

public starting Monday.

When new in 1959, the 950-square-foot Kentworth model home, built of brick, sold for \$8,500.

It was the prototypical starter house for an older but wiser generation — retiring grandparents of baby boomers, who bought into Webb's concept of an active lifestyle in their golden years, according to Sandberg.

Today, there are still 225 of the original residents.

One of them, Mildred Toldrian, 82, is a pioneer of both Sun City and Sun City West, where she moved when Del Webb Corp. opened it in 1978.

She and her now-deceased husband, Clarence, a 30-year Milwaukee postal worker, moved from Wisconsin to Phoenix in 1958

before being enticed to visit Sun City.

When they saw the place, "we were just amazed," she said.

"We fell in love with it," Toldrian said. "It was like country-club living, something we weren't used to."

On June 20, 1960, the couple bought a Brookside model home for about \$10,000 on a corner of a cul-de-sac at 12025 Hillcrest Drive.

"It was a two-bedroom, one-bath house, with a living room and nice kitchen area," Toldrian recalled.

The home was within walking distance of both Grand Center and the Oakmont Community Center, then the twin hubs of such Sun City socializing and recreational pursuits as golf, lawn bowling and swimming.

"We went swimming every day. If I went to the grocery store, I needed an hour and a half," she said, explaining that filling up her shopping cart was just an excuse for visiting with neighbors and making friends of new arrivals.

"It was a real fun community."

Despite Sun City's growth from a small, tight-knit community of 2,000 to today's population of 46,000, Toldrian said she and her husband never wanted to move.

They lived together in the same house for 14 years.

After her husband's death in 1974, she stayed there four more years before deciding it was time to leave.

"I felt I had to do something different," she said. "I picked up all my good memories" and departed for Sun City West.

With the sale of her Sun City home, she purchased another in its sister community, where she maintains an active lifestyle.

"I like Sun City and Sun City West," she said. "There's so much to do. If you can't find something that interests you, then there's something wrong with you."

Sloan, housing specialist for the American Association of Retired Persons in Washington, D.C.

"They have not only survived, they have prospered. I don't know how they do it, but they're doing something right."

Sloan, who is not a fan of age-restricted housing, is not the only national expert on senior housing who is amazed by the Sun City phenomenon.

"I think it is one of the most incredible feats of its kind," said George R. Genung Jr., executive director of the National Council on Senior Housing of the National Association of Home Builders in Washington, D.C. "They are far and away the leader in their field. It's incredibly difficult to sell to that market."

### Only 10% want to move

Research shows that only 10 percent of the people who retire are willing to move away from their homes, he said.

Genung, who has visited the Phoenix area many times and is familiar with Sun City, attributes the success of the community to a variety of reasons: luck, guts, hard work, outstanding marketing, good planning and business savvy.

"People think of Sun City the same way they think of the Empire State Building — it's big, and it's unique," Genung said.

Del Webb was lucky because he had 20,000 acres of cotton fields at his disposal from his partner in the venture, J.G. Boswell III. The land remained under cultivation until it was needed for more homes. By 1978, when the community was completed, 8,900 acres had been used.

Sun City West, just two miles northwest along Grand Avenue, started in 1978 and has a total of 5,700 acres; Sun City Tucson began three years ago and has 1,000 acres; and Sun City Las Vegas started a year ago and has 1,050 acres. Houses are still being sold in these communities.

"I think the way they planned it, taking the land as they needed it, reduced the risk," Genung said. "They had capital resources that most developers don't have, and they got the land at a reasonable rate. A smart entrepreneur, Mr. Del Webb."

Webb and his senior staff also had guts.

The Urban Land Institute in Washington, D.C., and a half dozen top developers in the country had told them:

"Old people want to be with their family, not together in an isolated community. . . . Financially, such a project would fail because of 'cannibalism' (more people would die than move in)."

But interviews with Florida retirees and the advice of a Phoenix psychiatrist indicated that an "active-retirement community," although never attempted before, would work.

### Amenities key

Those Floridians also said they had watched builders promise wonderful amenities in other retirement developments and never produce them.

So, before a single home was sold, the corporation spent more than \$2 million on a shopping center, a golf course and recreational facilities. Then five model homes were built, ranging in price from \$8,500 to \$11,750.

Sun City opened at 8 a.m. Thursday, New Year's Day, 1960. It was a modern-day land rush, with people waiting in long lines for hours to sign contracts with salesmen sitting on the floor of a tiny office.

More than 100,000 inquisitive people visited Sun City that weekend. By Sunday, there was a 2-mile-long traffic jam on Grand Avenue.

During that weekend, 237 homes were sold. By the end of the month, 400 had been sold, and an additional 675 were being planned. By the end of 1960, 2,000 homes had been sold.

Webb executives had estimated that 1,700 homes would be sold in the first three years.

A major advertising campaign and national media coverage about this extraordinary occurrence in a cotton field kept the customers rolling in.

Since Sun City began, an estimated 80 to 90 other active-adult communities have sprung up across the country, mostly in the Sun Belt, according to an independent study conducted for the Webb corporation.

### 'We still have the flagship'

"We still have the flagship of retirement communities in the world," boasted Sid Menk, 73, president of the Sun City Ambassadors, the local booster club. "Any of our seven recreation centers would be the envy of any retirement community in the country."

Genung said that during the past 30 years, Webb has managed to maintain its leadership position in the active-adult-housing market by remaining flexible, by changing or improving its product as the demand arises.

For example, the 346-bed, acute-care Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital was built in 1969 to accommodate Sun City's burgeoning population. It was named in memory of one of the three Boswell brothers who originally farmed the land where

Sun City was developed.

But while Del Webb marketing was busy espousing the wonderful lifestyle of its communities, the neighbors don't think much of the Sun Cities.

The Del Webb Corp. began a \$250,000 advertising blitz last fall called "Sun Cities Care" to counteract the unfavorable impression Valley residents have of the retirement communities.

The ad campaign came on the heels of a Valley-wide opinion poll that indicated that people believe residents of the Sun Cities do not contribute to the educational system and that they are isolated in their communities and are not willing to get involved in neighboring communities.

The corporation would not divulge the exact results of the poll.

### Origins of reputation

Deserved or not, the Sun Cities gained this image for a variety of reasons.

As a community without children, Sun City voters united to defeat 17 proposed bond issues in surrounding school districts from 1962 to 1974. Only two were approved.

The Peoria Unified School District, where youngsters were attending classes in double and triple shifts because of a lack of schools, finally asked Sun City to leave the district.

Later, the Dysart United School District asked Sun City West to leave for the same reason.

For the past couple of years, the Sun City Taxpayers Association has been fighting a state law that says areas outside of school districts still should pay some school taxes. An Arizona tax-court judge ruled in the association's favor in July.

Incorporation elections have failed twice in Sun City and once in Sun City West. Consequently, Maricopa County pays most of the bills for law enforcement and street improvements. Private contractors and improvement districts, paid for with resident fees, provide other services such as fire protection and street lighting.

The Recreation Centers of Sun City Inc., which has private golf courses, clubhouses and swimming pools valued at more than \$12 million, fought for nine years to avoid paying property taxes. It lost that battle last year in the Arizona Supreme Court.

### A bum rap, expert says

Jay Butler, director of the Arizona Real Estate Center at Arizona State University, said he thinks Sun City residents are getting a bum rap.

"The people out there get put down for living in their isolated, walled community," Butler said. "On the opposite side, young people like to live in apartment houses with other young

people. People like to live with people like themselves.

"Unfortunately, the only time you hear about Sun City is when it's something negative, like forcing a dog out of a condominium complex."

Genung said that because no one had ever done anything like it before, Sun City was a learning experience. There was some bad with the good.

For example, because it was so large, it tended to be sterile and isolated, with few facilities initially for aging residents. The later Sun Cities were scaled down, and more space was set aside for the ailing.

"They (the Webb executives) were the pioneers," Genung said. "They taught everyone how to do it, and they're still on the cutting edge."

"The industry owes them a vote of thanks. We all benefited from what they have taught us."

Menk, always a Sun City booster, agreed, saying that moving to Sun City probably adds 10 or 15 happy years to a person's life span.

"Sun City is not a mausoleum where people are filed away," he said. "This is a place to live."

*"It is one of the most incredible feats of its kind"*

# Sun City ages well in 30 years

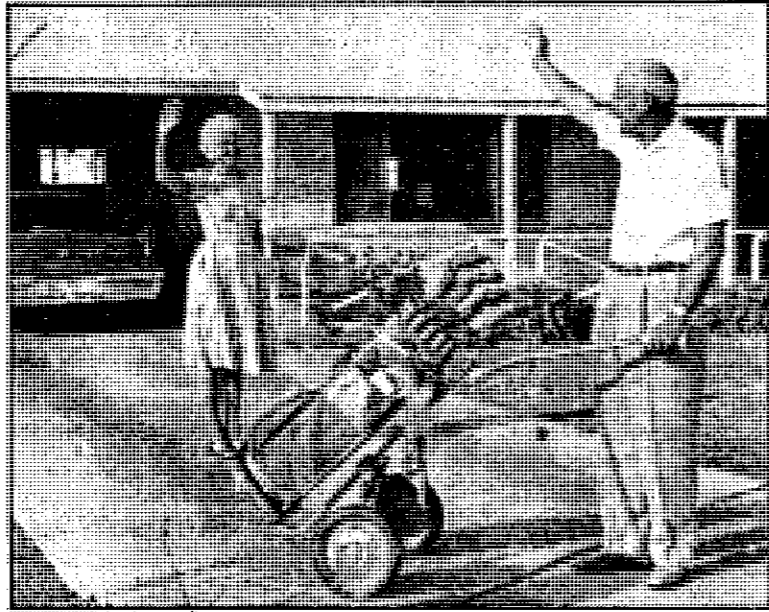
By Phyllis Gillespie  
The Arizona Republic

Uprooting thousand of retirees from the Midwest and plopping them down in the middle of an Arizona cotton field seemed like a harebrained scheme in 1960.

Today, as Sun City celebrates its 30th anniversary, the Del Webb Corp. still is cashing in on that original idea of an active-retirement community.

Del Webb's Sun City, with 46,000 residents, remains the largest retirement community in the country with restrictions that say at least one member of the household must be at least 55 years of age and no one under the age of 19 can reside there for longer than three months a year.

And the corporation still is defying the experts.



*Del Webb Corp.*

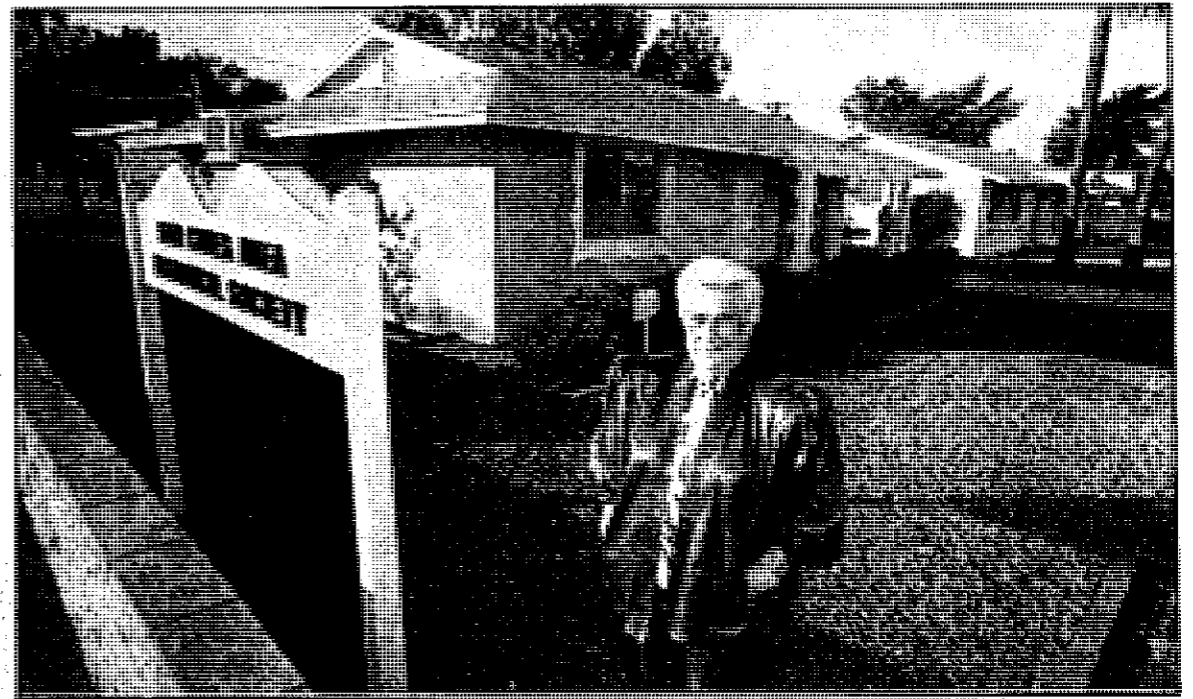
The Del Webb Corp. lured people to Sun City in the 1960s with advertisements that promised an active-retirement community.

Besides the original Sun City, three other Sun Cities are bucking the current home-buying slump, and a fifth Sun City is about to be announced for southern California.

"When you think of the research

that says older people don't want to move from their homes and that they don't want to live in age-segregated communities, I don't see how Sun City has survived," said Katie

— See **SUN CITY**, page A16



Michael Ging/The Arizona Republic

Vera Jean Painter, who bought Sun City's first official residence in 1984, sold her piece of history last year to the Sun Cities Area Historical Society. It was converted into a museum that will be open to the public starting Monday.

# City builder

## \$1.3 million investment put Sun City on the map

By P. ATWOOD WILLIAMS  
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The statue in the tiny park in Bell Center of Sun City founder Del E. Webb shows a man with a roll of blueprints. He is purposefully leaning forward with one leg on a sawhorse — symbolic of the determination and skills needed to build an active lifestyle community for retirees.

An early photo of Del E. Webb shows him as a smiling young carpenter in California with one leg on a makeshift sawhorse. Between the time the photo was taken and the statue was cast, tons of sawdust filled the air in Sun City.

But Webb did not do it alone. He had the savvy to surround himself with capable men, whom he rewarded early with raises and to whom he later delegated responsibilities as he left behind his saws and miter boxes and moved up figurative ladders to build a

reputation as a builder and sportsman.

But it was not one of them who had the idea for a retirement community in the mesquite patch of desert west of Phoenix.

Historians who wrote "Jubilee — the 25th Anniversary of Sun City" devoted many pages to Webb, a tall, quiet man who died of lung cancer in 1974.

But they also credited Elmer Johns, a California builder with the early concept of a community exclusively for retirees. In 1955, he had built the first homes in Youngtown and restricted residents to those at least 60.

The Youngtown Development Co. homes were modest ones designed for those with \$300 to \$400 monthly retirement incomes.

Builder Del Webb's working partner was L.C. Jacobson, See Cotton, Page 25

over

# Cotton field interested developers

—From Page 24

also a carpenter, who had risen in service in Webb's organization. He ran Webb's company from the office in Phoenix while Webb kept his projects running in Chicago, Washington and New York.

"It was Jacobson who had helped build the Webb empire into national leadership in the construction industry," said the authors of "Jubilee."

Besides fulfilling government contracts for air bases and fields, and skyscrapers in Los Angeles and office buildings in Salt Lake City, Phoenix and Albuquerque, the Webb organization had built San Manuel in 1953, near Tucson, for the Magma Copper Co. and, in 1956, the Clairemont Estates near San Diego.

With Joseph R. Ashton heading the housing division, the Webb Corp. built several hundred homes in north Phoenix.

It was Jacobson, however, who is credited with giving the approval to explore new retirement concepts noticed around the country. Webb had said that his grandfather, Jimmy, used to grouch about being old with "nothing to do."

Vice President Tom Breen contacted Northwestern University experts who said that "separating older people from their families won't work."

Government pamphlets echoed this theme. Breen arranged with a friend to interview people in new housing

developments in Florida.

He reported that there were complaints about the failure of developers to deliver things promised by salesmen with "beautiful drawings and blueprints instead of tangible evidence."

Breen condensed his findings and formulated the concept of "Activity, Economy and Individuality." Finally, a Phoenix psychiatrist indicated that they might be on the right track, even though other Webb executives feared that building a community for retirees would be self-defeating; residents would die faster than they could be replaced.

"We bristled like a hound dog in a fight but decided to give the idea a whirl contrary to their recommendations," said Jacobson in an interview for "Jubilee."

It was hound dog Jacobson who jumped on the bone — the 10,000 acres offered by cotton rancher James G. Boswell II. Boswell had come to the Webb office in Phoenix unannounced, and Jacobson immediately rounded up Ashton and they took a tour of the acreage on the south side of Grand Avenue with another 10,000 across the railroad tracks.

By 2 a.m. the next day the men had hammered out the basic agreement, which permitted Webb to purchase the 20,000 acres in parcels without tying up huge capital sums. The Del E. Webb Development Co. was formed in-

volving Boswell and Webb.

"The team of Jacobson, Ashton and Breen had convinced Webb that an investment of \$1.3 million in a new retirement concept could succeed. These were the core of Webb men who put the Webb muscle and money on

the line as the prime movers of the concept that built Sun City," said "Jubilee" authors.

"Del Webb didn't promise what he couldn't deliver," said Wally Britton, a foreman on the Sun City project and later a vice president.

He remembers Jan. 1, 1960,

the day the first home was sold. There were already a shopping center, a nine hole golf course, Oakmont Recreation Center and the King's Inn — the things that other builders had only promised and frequently were very slow to deliver.



# Cotton pickin' days of Sun City

## Land was field of dreams long before Del E. Webb

By JACQUE PAPPAS  
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Long before Del E. Webb developed his 8,600-acre retirement community, Sun City's golf courses and swimming pools were the site of brothels and cotton fields.

In the late 1800s, pioneers began farming land near the west bank of the Agua Fria River.

R.P. Davie, a businessman from Marinette, Wis., was impressed by the growth and potential of the area and bought several thousand acres of land between New River and the Agua Fria.

He named the area after his hometown, but eventually was forced to sell his land in May 1920 to the Southwest Cotton Co. because his sugar beet crops failed.

Southwest dug wells and planted cotton fields on the Marinette site.

Laborers who handpicked the cotton from July to May formed a small community that some remember for its

"house of ill repute."

In 1936, Marinette Ranch was sold to the J.G. Boswell Co., which in turn developed the tract of land into one of the most prosperous cotton plantations in the country.

Residents who occupied the community dwindled as machinery replaced cotton pickers in the fields.

Three men who lived and worked in the area years ago, recently shared their experiences of watching Sun City emerge from the Marinette cotton fields.

They spoke to locals in a forum sponsored by the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

Hank Raymond moved to the area once known as Marinette in 1928.

"Marinette had anything you wanted in it. A general store, a service station, post office, pool hall and barber shop. We lived near where Sun City Country Club now is," Raymond said.

Raymond started working for the Boswell operation in 1944 and retired as vice pres-



**THEY WERE THERE** — James G. Boswell II, left, Hank Raymond, center, and Bob McMicken all lived and worked in the cotton farming community of Marinette before it was developed into the 8,900 acre master planned adult community of Sun City.

ident and general manager of the operation in 1962.

"I remember them talking about building a motel here (Kings Inn) and I thought they were nuts trying to get anyone to come and eat and sleep in Marinette," Raymond said. "A few years later, a friend asked

me to go eat lunch at the King's Inn and we had to stand in line to get in. It was a hard thing for many of us to do — adjust to the progress. It's been a revelation to me to be part of this great achievement."

Bob McMicken, who now

lives in Kansas, moved to Marinette 71 years ago. His father served as the first general manager of Southwest Cotton Co.

McMicken was vice president of the livestock operations for the Boswell ranches. See Fields, Page 27

Daily News-Sun photo by Stephen Cherek

OVER

# Fields became links

—From Page 26

"We probably ran cattle over where many of your (Sun Citians') houses are," McMicken said.

The land Boswell owned was later released to Del Webb in a partnership arrangement under which Sun City was built.

James G. Boswell II said the hospital, named after Colonel Walter O. Boswell, gave Sun City the justification to jump north of the railroad tracks.

"I spent all my time leveling the land while Webb spent all of his time putting hills in it," Boswell said. "We didn't

know whether it would be 100 people or 2,000 people. Being part of Sun City is something that has always made me proud because it was something that was needed."



Submitted photo

**FIELD OF DREAMS** — The humble beginnings of South Golf Course can be seen in this aerial look of Marinette, in Nov. 1959, just before Sun City was established. Grand Avenue was the main road to the area.

# Stories reflect Webb legacy

Drawing on his years of experience, the Daily News-Sun has compiled this special section to celebrate Sun City's anniversary.

Although Del E. Webb is credited by many for envisioning the 8,600 acre retirement community, he did not do it alone. He had the savvy to surround himself with capable men to whom he later delegated responsibilities as he left behind his saws and miter boxes and moved up figurative ladders to build a reputation as a builder and sportsman.

Long before the Webb company developed the retirement community, the land belonged to a small cotton farming town called Marinette.

But the Marinette days were soon forgotten when on Jan. 1, 1960, Sun City became a reality. In the first 72 hours, 237 model homes were sold and by the end of the month, more than 400 homes were sold.

Pleased with the overwhelming success of their home sales, Webb continued the trend of gradually developing patches of new land.

"Webb never expected Sun City to go north of Grand Avenue. He just took a small spot and experimented. As homes would sell, then he would take another small slice of land and develop that," said pioneer Randy Waites, who bought his Sun City home in January 1960. "He just kept taking bites until this massive retirement community evolved."

Phil and Ruth Compton moved to Sun City in 1960 with hundreds of other pioneers who helped establish the retirement community.

They selected plans of a model home and had their home built for \$9,300.

The Comptons still live in the same house they bought 30 years ago.

Property deed records from 30 years ago confirm that Sun City's first house was purchased by retired businessman John G. McDonald.

The home, one of five original model homes, is now the office of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society. It sold for \$8,900 in 1960 and was appraised last year at \$44,000.

Probably of little surprise to the community's pioneers is the fact that prices have climbed more than 300 percent since 1960.

The more exact figure, 321 percent, was calculated by a state Department of Economic Security statistical analyst, who compared monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) reports from October 1960 to October 1989.

The HiwayHouse, a Sun City landmark, is featured in this special section via photos and an interview with Eldora Barnett, 69, of Youngtown,

who remembers dishing up meals for prices ranging from \$1.55 for french fried shrimp to \$2.45 for broiled choice filet mignon.

About 3,000 Sun City men and women participate in 64 bowling leagues at Bell and Lakeview Lanes at about half the cost of bowling elsewhere, said Dick Austin, president of the Sun City Bowling Association.

The streets in Sun City are as unique as the concept of active retirement living.

"A lot of the street names originated from the residents themselves and from the communities they came from," said Dick Masten, Del Webb vice president of operations.

Built around the circle of streets are a number of businesses that have emerged in the community during the past 30 years.

Health care facilities are another type of business that has sprung up in the community. Sun Valley Lodge, the first nursing home built in Sun City, took in its first resident on Sept. 1, 1965.

Sun Valley Lodge was initially geared to be the community's first hospital. But talks of the Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital changed the plans of local residents.

In February 1967, James G. Boswell II, president of the J.G. Boswell Co. that owned much of the land Sun City is now built on, offered to grant \$1.2 million for the hospital.

On Nov. 6, 1970, the great dream was fulfilled with the dedication of Boswell hospital.

These are our stories.

Staff writer Jacque Rappas contributed most of the stories and was aided in her research by local residents Jane Freeman, Glenn Sanberg, Evelyn Parry, Margaret Diggs and Walter Witt.

Del Webb Corp.'s Martha Moyer also helped in providing the Daily News-Sun with photographs and information.

A number of sources, credited within the stories, helped staff members Connie Steele, Richard Moore, Mike Garrett, Priscilla Williams and Jennifer Arp, who also contributed to this special edition, along with members of our photo department and our copy desk.

Graphics for the cover were done by Gary Smathers, an artist in the advertising department of the Daily News-Sun. The cover picture of the swimmers was contributed by the Del Webb Corp.

And, the Sun Cities Area Historical Society loaned us the use of many photographs.

# Webb's concept caught on fast

By JACQUE PAPPAS  
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — On Jan. 1, 1960, a rosebud called Sun City made its debut and bloomed into a successful retirement community known throughout the world.

Sun City has grown from five model homes that prospective buyers viewed along Oakmont Drive 30 years ago to an 8,900-acre master planned adult community.

The least expensive two bedroom, one bath home in 1960 cost \$8,500 and the most expensive model was a three bedroom, two bath for \$11,300.

Sales were brisk as thousands poured into Sun City to

get a glimpse of a new way of life created by Del Webb Development Corp.

The concept of an active retirement lifestyle was an instant success.

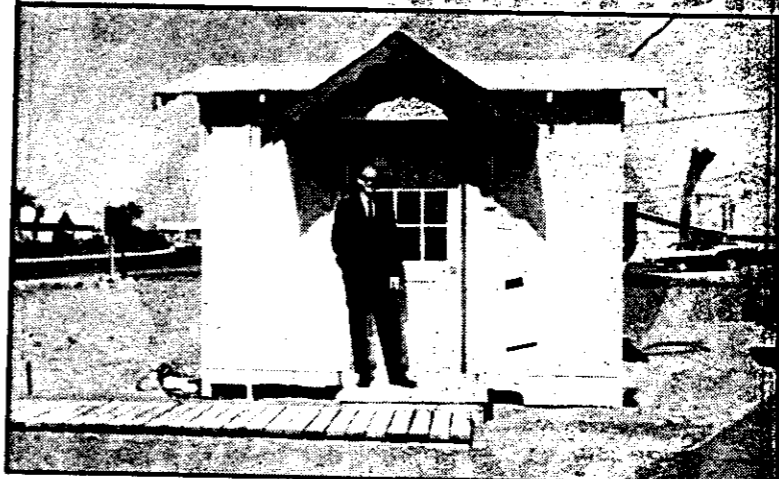
In the first 72 hours, 237 model homes were sold and by the end of January, more than 400 homes were sold.

Margaret Diggs, a Sun City Pioneer who moved to the community in 1961, said a wave of excitement filled the air as young retirees sought a "new way of life."

"We wrote enthusiastic letters to friends back home. Eventually Sun City grew beyond what I ever imagined. It offered so many promises. Just

an entirely new way of life," Diggs said. "We were all very excited. Some of the people thought they were taking a risk but many couldn't help themselves — they all just fell in love with little Sun City. I know Youngtown is really the first retirement community, but more people knew about Sun City."

Although Youngtown opened in the fall of 1954, some were not convinced that the concept of an active retirement community in the Arizona desert would succeed, said Glenn Sanberg, a member of the Sun Cities Area See Sales, Page 34



Submitted photo

WHERE IT STARTED — Owen Childress, a salesman for Del E. Webb Corp., stands outside the first construction shed, which doubled as the first sales office.

# Sales were brisk

—From Page 33  
Historical Society.

"In the beginning, Webb took the idea of a retirement community to the experts — doctors and psychiatrists. They said it wouldn't work," Sandberg said. "They said people will not leave their families and come to a retirement community and live."

But the dream of dedicated people who believed in Sun City put the psychiatrists' notions to shame.

Many people who visited Sun City in the early years bought and paid for their homes before they were even built.

"It wasn't hard selling people homes. Active retirement is what Webb stressed and people liked the idea, no matter how new the concept was," says John Dodt, 90, who was a salesman for the Webb corporation in the early 1960s.

"I just signed contract after contract. People would put the \$500 down on the home one minute after we took them to see an empty lot full of dirt where their home was someday going to be built."

Dodt's wife, Ina, was a hostess for Webb in the early 1960s.

"When Webb had open houses, I would greet and talk to the people who came to see what Sun City was all about," said Ina, who has lived in the same home along South Golf Course with her husband for 29 years. "Every magazine in the country publicized Sun City and it brought them in by the thousands."

The Del Webb organization publicized its premier Sun City retirement community in



Submitted photo

**SPREADING OUT** — This aerial view of Sun City, taken in the fall of 1962, shows the rapid spread of the retirement community.

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**'Concrete, steel and lumber can make the buildings, but people make the community. Together, we can realize a way of life unprecedented in America.'**

Del E. Webb

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newspapers and magazines throughout the nation.

It was those advertisements that brought many people to Arizona seeking a new way of life that is now copied around the world.

Beulah Heuer, 90, moved to Sun City in November 1960 with her husband Albert.

"We saw the ads in the paper so we thought we would go out and take a look. There were no stores, no nothing," Heuer said. "But we bought all the same and I still live in

the house that was once a vacant lot in the middle of nowhere."

Pleased with the overwhelming success of their home sales, Webb continued the trend of gradually developing patches of new land.

"Webb never expected Sun City to go north of Grand Avenue. He just took a small spot and experimented. As homes would sell, then he would take another small slice of land and develop that," said pioneer Randy Waites, who bought his Sun City home in January 1960.

Retirees were appreciative of this new way of life.

Webb and his associates received hundreds of letters of praise including one written by a Sun City resident on Dec. 11, 1960.

"A year ago we were living in Michigan faring another winter of cold and icy roads. Now we have a lovely home in an ideal climate. You have made this possible by building Sun City."

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## Historian chronicles life in the 'Magic Kingdom' — Sun City

By SCOTT BONTZ  
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Someday Sun City may be buried.

Then it could be rediscovered by archaeologists.

Historians could puzzle over what the place was like to live in.

"Why did the streets wander so?" they might wonder.

Heads would be scratched over why the community was built.

But future historians may not have to spend much time guessing whether John Findlay's writings survive.

Findlay, an assistant professor of history at Pennsylvania State University, is already chronicling Sun City for a scholarly book he hopes to call "Magic Kingdoms."

To use the name, he needs permission from Disneyland. That original Magic Kingdom and Sun City are two of five

planned communities Findlay is studying firsthand for the book.

He spent the past two weeks in Sun City, poring over records of developer Del E. Webb Communities Inc. and Sun Citian Jane Freeman.

The other "communities" are Stanford Industrial Park in Palo Alto, Calif., Seattle Center and Houston's Astrodome.

What all five have in common, Findlay said, is that they sprang up in the post-World

War II American West as the result of a swelling national confidence in technology and a desire to control the environment.

Each was a pioneer in its type.

"In many ways, the migration to the West never ended," said Findlay, a 31-year-old who grew up in the suburbs of Seattle and earned his doctorate from the University of California at Berkeley.

Western pioneers originally drew their culture from the East, Findlay said, but gradually developed their own 20th century civilization.

Part of that innovation was Sun City-like retirement communities.

"Sun City is a radical concept," Findlay said.

"People who came to the West were often reacting against the East," he said. "They were trying to build a

cleaner city ... with personal freedom and opportunity."

The key to much of this freedom was the automobile.

Los Angeles, the epitome of a Western city, was designed for the car. Its planners thought a network of freeways would help create a great place to live.

But the freedom of the automobile had prices: congestion, smog, sprawl.

"The growth was simply too

★ Historian, A7

# \* Historian

—From A1  
much for any planner," Findlay said.

Westerners reacted again, building privately planned communities in and around explosive growth.

"Within each of these sprawling, chaotic communities is planned growth," Findlay said.

"If you look at it from a macro view, Sun City is part of the problem," he said. "If you look at it from inside Sun City, you have no problem at all. It's ordered, cohesive."

Findlay said control of the environment is a common theme in each of the planned communities he is studying.

At Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., an illusion of nature is produced mechanically.

In Sun City, houses are climate-controlled through scorching summers, sculpted golf courses wrap around artificial lakes and residents paint gravel yards a grassy green.

The pinnacle of environmental management is achieved in the Astrodome, Findlay said, where "control over nature is entire." Real grass was sown in the indoor stadium, but cultivation efforts failed and plastic grass had to be planted — hence the name "Astroturf."

Findlay said planned communities rising during the years 1950-65 in great part reflected the anti-communist, technology-loving sentiments of most Americans at that time.



JOHN FINDLAY

**'Sun City is a radical concept . . . People who came to the West were often reacting against the East. They were trying to build a cleaner city ... with personal freedom and opportunity'**

The communities and much of the science and technology that made them possible sprang from a tension between confidence in the United States' abil-

ity to solve domestic problems and a fear of the Soviet Union's growing strength, he said.

That supreme American confidence, he said, was shaken after 1965 with race riots and division over U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.

"The whole vision itself has to be re-evaluated," said Findlay, who as a historian often talks of the past in the present tense.

He said there was no overt discrimination in planned communities, but that their builders assumed all Americans aspired to what he called middle-class values.

"These places all gear themselves to the middle strata of society," Findlay said. "If you're in Watts, you have a much different view of the world."

He said Americans are still more confident — and justifiably — than any other people in the world.

"It's just that after '65, that confidence can no longer be absolute," Findlay said. He said water and petroleum resources are finite.

"In the '80s," Findlay said, "the confidence needs to be more careful."

People in the 1950s were not naive, he said; they just could not see limits.

Findlay said he thinks older people who live in retirement communities retain much of that former confidence.

"It's more intact for them than for the rest of society," he said.

He said he is impressed that planned communities are still successful after their premises have come to be challenged.

Findlay said that in contrast to the other developments he is studying, Sun City was not as much a result of science and technology advances as it was of there being, for the first time, a generation of Americans who had the money and time to retire to a leisure lifestyle.

People pulled up lifelong roots and left their families — although in an increasingly transient society, many of their families had already left.

Findlay said Sun City's settlers took chances coming to live in an unproven concept community in the desert.

"These people are doing something new and they're doing it with confidence," said Findlay.

"It's the old frontier story all over again," he said.

Findlay said last week he had talked at length to only about five Sun Citians, but he gave several evaluations of the retirement community.

He said he was impressed by how active Sun Citians are, both physically and in volunteer efforts that amount to a sort of "informal government."

"As a whole, the community itself doesn't want to be involved on the political level,"

Findlay said. He said desire not to have a municipal government is part of the reason many people move to Sun City.

Findlay said he does not think a desire to get away from children is a common reason.

"These people are not anti-children by any means," he said. "They miss kids. They would like to have more contact."

He said many are glad to see the young people who work in Sun City. He said some go out of their way to strike up conversations with sales clerks.

This may be a result of loneliness many Sun Citians face as widows and widowers, Findlay said.

"It's very sad," he said. "But they don't want to be pitied. They're fiercely independent."

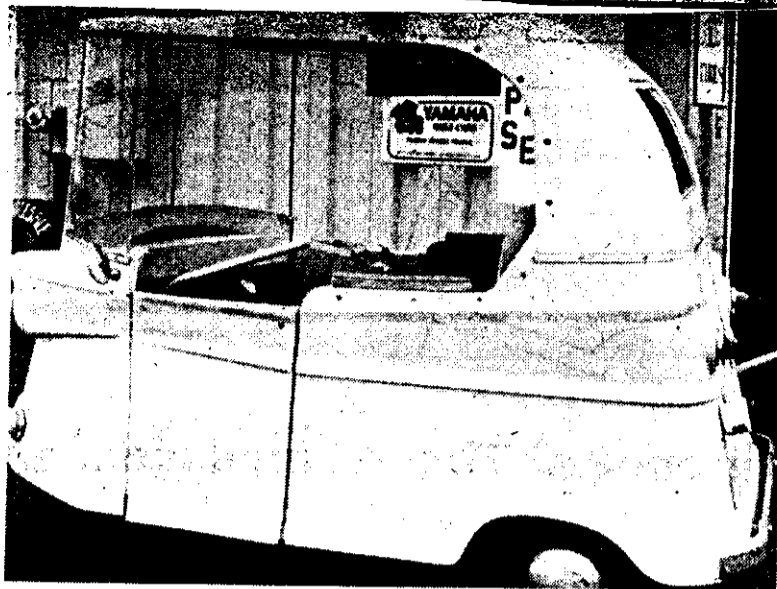
Despite their desire for con-

tact with others, however, Findlay said many retirees may come to Sun City as an escape. Here, he said, they can shut out things that might pose a challenge to their sense that all is right in their world — things such as the poor, congestion, pollution and the complaints and values of younger generations.

"You have a sense that the environment is OK," Findlay said. "It's easy to feel yourself isolated."

Findlay, to whom the sprawl of Western cities appeals — he said he loves freeways — said he did not think this aspect of Sun City is necessarily bad.

"I would be one of the last people to go up to a Sun Citian and tell them they are wrong," he said. "It's not better or worse. It's just different."



One golden oldie is Vincent Pucci's 1960s-vintage golf-shopping cart, which will be in the Sun City 25th Anniversary parade.

(News-Sun photo)

'My God,  
what  
did you do?'

## Puccis pioneered

By HELEN ALLEN  
Staff Writer

Vincent and Anna Pucci's sons were sure their parents were being swindled when the Puccis plunged a deposit on a Sun City home in 1959.

In fact, they were so sure that they had an attorney investigate Del Webb.

And they remained skeptical, even after their Chicago attorney found nothing wrong, \* —They, page B23

From B19  
recalls Mariann Greenlee. **HER PARENTS**, she explained, came to Arizona on a house-hunting trip after her mother, suffering from severe asthma, was bluntly told by the family doctor "to move to a better climate or make arrangements with an undertaker."

They were almost ready to buy a home in Scottsdale, Mrs. Greenlee said, when they heard about a new retirement community going up in the west Valley and decided to take a look.

What they found was a trailer sitting in the middle of a cotton field near Grand and 107th avenues.

All the salesman had to show at that time, Mrs. Greenlee said, were a bunch of brochures with home sketches and Del Webb's concept of a retirement community.

**MODEL HOMES** then were in the freshly poured concrete-slab stage.

Despite everything, Mrs. Greenlee said, her father became intrigued with Webb's idea of a retirement community and told his wife to make out a check for a substantial deposit on a home.

When the Puccis returned to Chicago with the news, accord-

ing to their daughter, the family's immediate reaction was:

"How could you do that with all the swindles going on?"

**HER OLDER** brothers, she said, continued to be skeptical even when their parents got ready, a few months later, to move to their new Sun City home.

"My brother told Pop, 'You're the only ones who are going to be out there.'"

Accompanying them this time was their 18-year-old daughter.

Mrs. Greenlee mentioned that her own reaction, on seeing Sun City for the first time in early 1960 was, "My God, what did you do?"

**LOOKING BACK** now, she mused, the move turned out to be the best thing that could have happened to her parents, who still live in their original home on Hacienda Drive.

Her father, she mentioned, is now 91 and her mother, 78.

Among their enjoyments, she said, was being able to grow flowers and vegetables year-round and meet people from all parts of the country.

They also enjoyed scooting around the community in a golf car, Mrs. Greenlee remarked, after poor eyesight forced her father to give up driving the family car.



# She's lived here all her life? Impossible!

By SUE MEULENDYK  
Staff Writer

Many long-time Arizona residents resent the development of agricultural land into housing developments.

However, one person in particular sees the rise of Sun City from cotton fields as a boon for the northwest area.

Amanda Monreal Durand grew up in Marinette, a small community in the midst of 11,000 acres of cotton.

**AND SHE** saw that land change as it became the nation's first active retirement center.

"I was worried at first because I wondered what would happen to the fieldworkers," she said.

But the workers, mostly Mexican or of Mexican descent, took the initiative to improve their lot.

They started their own landscaping maintenance services and other businesses, learned construction trades and took up house-cleaning for \$12 an hour with a four-hour mini-

mum.

"I **COULD** see progress. I wasn't going to feel badly. The first time we ran into this was in 1961," she said.

Mrs. Durand told a story of one man who had a job pouring cement for Del E. Webb Development Co.(Devco).

He finished work for Devco at 3 p.m. and after work would use his new skill to extend residents' patios. He told friends he never went home (to El Mirage) with less than \$50 in his pocket.

"Now ask me, am I sorry to see the farming go? Sun City is like a big job market."

**BEFORE THE** advent of Sun City, the cotton fields provided jobs for hundreds of field workers, many from Mexico.

"Eleven thousand acres of cotton takes a lot of hand power," she said, and the cotton was picked by hand until 1951. "It took forever to pick."

As a child, Mrs. Durand weighed cotton in the company store her father operated and

\* She's, A8

OVER

**—From A6**

where her mother worked as postmaster.

Workers harvested cotton from July to April and brought in their day's pick to be weighed. They were given receipts that entitled them to their pay, most spent at the store.

**THOUGH MANY** workers returned to Mexico from April to September, there never was a slow season, she said. Between harvests, there were fields to be cultivated and irrigated.

As workers returned, they often brought brothers, uncles, wives and children.

"That's how the Phoenix area grew," she said.

Tent cities sprang up around the wells and from the wells the small communities took their names: El Norte (north of Grand Avenue), El Verde, Las Botas (the boots), Sal Si Puedes (come out if you can), Hollywood (where a number of pretty girls lived) or Las Pechas, named for the chinaberry trees nearby.

**DESPITE THE** sun-up to

sun-down hours, Mrs. Durand said the workers found ample time and energy to celebrate several times a week—birthdays, saints' days, baptisms, weddings.

"They were a joyous people," she said. "At the drop of a hat you'd have a party."

The few houses in the vicinity of 105th Avenue and what was to be Coggins Drive, she said, were wooden structures well spaced because of the danger of fire spreading.

There was a house built of rocks in the vicinity of 105th

Avenue near what now is North Golf Course.

Grand Avenue, or the Wick-enburg Highway, formed a natural divider even then, since it was raised far above grade level to prevent flooding.

**LIKE** other people she mentions, Mrs. Durand, of Italian descent, expanded her horizons beyond the cotton fields and tent cities of Marinette.

"One day I grew up and went to work for J.G. Boswell Co. in Litchfield Park," Mrs. Durand said, adding her work-

ing was over her father's protests.

Through reading and working for several local companies, she became an agricultural specialist.

Later, however, she went to Glendale Community College and Lamson Business College.

**MRS. DURAND** now lives in Sun City, where she sells real estate.

"People ask me how long I've lived in Sun City. I tell them, 'All my life,' and they say 'That's impossible.'"



Ethel Sparks, left, and her daughter, Ruth Sparks Byrne, remember the early days of life in Marinette and the surrounding desert. (Story, A9)

# Marinette stood, then crumbled where Sun City grew

Long before Del Webb gambled on a retirement community between the Agua Fria and New River channels, other men had gambled on crops here—sometimes winning, sometimes losing.

Long before Lawrence Welk performed in the Sun Bowl, fine orchestras played in a grand hotel ballroom in pre-Depression days—but the hotel burned down.

Long before bubblers and sprinklers greened the golf courses, the rivers here ran with water nearly all year and mules were hitched to walk in slow circles so wells could be dug—many of them still gurgle up clear water.

Long before Santa Fe trains shrieked cautiously past flashing boulevard signals, locomotives stopped here to take on water from the landmark tank—people welcomed the tracks then, now they are an unremoveable hazard.

Long before Cadillacs and Buicks, golf cars and adult tricycles watched out for each other, children roller-skated with free abandon on Grand Avenue—after school or church, or before the game on the sandlot baseball diamond.

Long before this was Sun City, it was Marinette.

The name rings a bell; that's the name of a banquet room at the Suntowner restaurant, the name of Sun City's newest recreation center, the name of several clubs, the name on a water utility pumping station on 107th off Grand. It's also the name of a city in Wisconsin.

But this Marinette is gone: it is not even a ghost town, for nothing of it remains except a few frame houses, which were moved to El Mirage and Surprise when the bulldozers came,

some rusting pipes protruding from abandoned wells, some bruised bits of concrete and rock which may have been foundations of the general store or the supervisors' houses or other structures from the "hub" of Marinette, between 105th and 100th, between Grand and Coggins.

What happened in those last few years to the agricultural community that proclaims itself with its own spanking new post office in 1912 is a memory to former Marinette residents who scattered to Glendale, Litchfield Park, El Mirage and beyond.

Marinette started out as a copy-cat to nearby Peoria, much like Sun City began with the same concept as Youngtown.

History repeats itself. But never exactly.

The same year that Wickenburg was officially named and began its "gold growth," the old Hohokam canals of the Salt River Valley were being rebuilt. As the possibilities of agriculture in this seemingly barren land broadened, other canal companies were established and one of these waterway developers—who had just brought water to a 38,000-acre irrigation district west of Phoenix—went back to Illinois to entice farmers to move here.

The proposal must have seemed economically sound, for two wealthy residents of Peoria, Ill., purchased the land and water rights and the town of Peoria, Arizona, was born in the late 1800s.

By the early 1900s, Peoria farmers were prospering in cattle and starting to experiment with cotton, a crop the Indians had cultivated successfully.

This potential impressed a businessman from Marinette, Wis., twin city of Menominee, Mich., locat-

ed on Lake Michigan's Green Bay.

Like so many Wisconsin towns, Marinette was named from Indian legend—a Menominee princess. Perhaps this was a charm to R.P. Davie, who bought and leased acreage between the Agua Fria and New River on either side of the Vulture Road—the "grand avenue" between Phoenix and Wickenburg and the prospering Vulture Mine beyond.

This land differed from the Peoria development however, in that there were no modern canals extending out here from the east.

So Davie hired a contractor with 200 mules to clear the entire area between 99th and 111th avenues of the mesquite and sagebrush, then drilled 10 wells by mule-power.

In 1912, Marinette, Arizona, became official.

Perhaps because he had no experience in cotton-growing, Davie did not turn to this as a cash crop.

Some historical references note that he gambled on sugar beets and lost because the soil wouldn't produce a sweet enough beet. Whatever the reason was for his failure after investing so much money and time in the land, he sold his holdings in 1920 to the Southwest Cotton Co., a subsidiary of Good-year Tire and Rubber.

They, too, gambled with this land at first, trying to cultivate Yuli, a type of sagebrush whose roots produced a white sticky substance the company believed could form a rubber-like base for a type of synthetic tire.

Mrs. Mandy Durand, a Marinette resident as a child who moved to Glendale and then, at retirement, to Sun City, remembers seeing these bushes in 1928 when her family, the Monreals of Phoe-

... came to ...  
and run the mercantile store in Marinette. "It was planted from Nevada Avenue north to Grand Avenue. I learned later that another tire and rubber company had planted the bush in an area sought of Tucson and lost an estimated \$14 million on the venture."

But Southwest Cotton knew cotton.

They planted more fields, dug more wells and administered the "company compound" at Marinette from the main offices in Litchfield Park.

Thus, Marinette never had a chance to grow as Peoria had. She could not even become a second-place stopping point for travelers between Phoenix and Wickenburg and points beyond, for most trains and travelers rested in prosperous Peoria.

Since all of Marinette's population worked for Southwest, she was a town of labor and sweat—a distinctive contrast to today.

But the Mexican-Americans were not transient laborers since cotton was hand-picked from mid-July to the last part of May. There were celebrations for baptisms, marriages, Saints Days; there was music and dancing, especially in the "tent cities" which clustered around the scattered wells.

The town itself experienced an influx of people in the mid-'30s, as folks from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri and Texas deserted the Dust Bowl and bent their backs with the cotton ginning operation.

(The gin was located where the Sun City Medical Building is now.)

But, ironic as it sounds, progress stopped Marinette again.

In 1936, the ranch was sold to the J. G. Boswell Co., also of

Litchfield Park and the old Georgia cotton family—with the know-how and fresh money—replaced the mules and field workers with machines.

The crops flourished but the people dwindled. The gin and its operation was transported to Litchfield Park; sections of the land were subleased; crops diversified into lettuce and alfalfa.

World War II brought destiny to the area, but not in the form of renewed prosperity for Marinette.

In 1941, Del Webb's construction company was awarded the contract to build Luke Air Force Base and, though it would be only speculation whether or not Webb even noticed the dusty wide spot in the road called Marinette by its remaining 25 post-war residents, something of its potential for other than agricultural use might have remained.

The land had water, a main railroad line, and a main highway which led right into (and out of) the capital city of Phoenix.

In 1955 when Youngtown and the concept of a retirement community caught the public's eye, the Marinette that R.P. Davie had hoped would prosper was only a shell of his vision.

And the impact of synthetic fibers in the commercial market was not giving that shell much warmth for hatching in the eyes of the Boswell Company either.

Yet the circumstances, the speculation, the ideas came together, and in 1959, Boswell released the acreage to Webb who fertilized the land between the Agua Fria and New River dry beds with slump block, asphalt, nails, glass, and talent—and there emerged something even more striking than the mythical Phoenix bird, the very real Sun City.

**B**efore he asked Del E. Webb to start building Sun City, Tom Breen queried noted gerontologists on whether his concept for the retirement community would work.

"When we opened up, they said we were crazier than hell," said Breen, a former Webb executive, actor and Marine.

At the time, gerontologists contended that the elderly received a "vicarious feeling of youth from being around the young," he said.

But Breen had a friend, Lou Silverstein, conduct an informal poll of Florida retirees that produced a different result.

"Without exception, they said they loved children but had paid their dues and wanted to live on their own," said Breen, now a resident of La Jolla, Calif.

Webb's reaction to these conflicting theories was, "I hope you guys know what you're doing, go ahead," Breen said.

Because the Florida retirees had been burned by promises of recreational facilities that were never built, Breen decided to build the facilities first and sell houses second.

Robert H. Johnson, Webb's protege and successor as president of the Del E. Webb Corp., recalled that executives were in a somber mood early in the morning of Jan. 1, 1960, when they huddled in a construction office.

"They were up all night, wondering if anyone would show up," Johnson said. Fred Kuentz, the Del E. Webb Development Co.'s chairman and chief executive officer, said Webb had made a \$2 million gamble on Sun City, and it was uncertain how the dice would roll.

The executives were shocked when 100,000 retirees deluged the original models, the Oakmont Recreation Center and the Oakmont Golf Course for three days during the grand opening to buy 237 homes worth \$2.5 million.

"Cars were backed up to Glendale. It was quite exhilarating to look at," said John Meeker, who later became president of the development company.

Kuentz, a Webb employee for 35 years, said the response "far exceeded our expectations."

But the balloon soon burst after the uniqueness of Sun City began to wear off, and five years later, the retirement community's health had slid onto the critical list.

Meeker, then in charge of designing the small, concrete-block, pastel-colored houses built south of Grand Avenue at Sun City's inception, said sales had fallen rapidly.

After selling 1,301 homes the first year at prices that ranged from \$8,900 to more than \$11,000, sales fell to 907 the second year and eventually to 395 in 1965.

Johnson said the Del E.

# 'When we opened up, they said we were crazier than hell'

By JIM WALSH / Northwest Valley Bureau

Webb Corp., which at that time owned a 51 percent share in the Del E. Webb Development Co., had sunk \$10 million in debt.

The deficits apparently were due to some unconventional accounting practices, business setbacks for the Del E. Webb Corp., the failures of Sun City, Fla., and Sun City, Calif., and a cash-flow problem for the development firm.

Kuentz said poor locations were chosen for Sun City's Florida and California clones, and the company encountered more competition from other

developers there than in Arizona.

The Webb development subsidiary had shelled out thousands of dollars to build golf courses and recreation centers, but homes weren't being sold fast enough to retire the debt, said Owen Childress, then chief financial officer for the development firm and now executive vice president of First American Title in Phoenix.

"We had some people in our downtown office who were saying, in effect, that Sun City would eat its young" with the

death rate exceeding growth, Childress said.

Johnson said some directors contended that Sun City residents would die in two or three years, leaving the company with the burden of selling not only new houses, but used ones as well.

Their advise to Webb was to sell out, but he didn't.

Meeker recalls Webb saying, "I started with nothing. I've built it into something, and I'm not going to stop now."

Continued on SC4

Continued from SC4

to keep themselves busy. The active retirement wasn't so active.

So the company began giving away color television sets and other gifts as inducements for attending club meetings, and interest increased, Meeker said.

"We broke the ice, so to speak. They met each other, and we became their silent partner, a coach or something," he said.

Through some tricky negotiations, Childress was able to smooth over disputes between residents concerning the Oakmont and Fairway recreation centers.

The settlement allowed Sun City residents to use all recreation centers. Previously, only residents of specific streets could use the nearest recreation center.

In parallel move to please residents, the company stopped advertising nationally so it could invest in construction of more recreational facilities, The Lakes Club and Viewpoint Lake.

"If we kept the people happy, they were the best salesmen for us," Meeker said. "They had confidence in us that we'd do what was best for all of the people."

Childress said he left company meetings to personally visit the homes of residents with complaints and give them straight answers about whether Webb would correct the problem.

The problems "were small in our minds, but big in their minds. It was their last home," he said. "At least they got an answer."

Meeker said residents, like William Chapman, responded by stepping forward to make a contribution to the community. At one point, Webb had plans to build a 50-bed hospital.

But Chapman and other residents insisted on a better hospital and raised \$1.2 million to match a donation from the J.G. Boswell Foundation, and Boswell Memorial Hospital was born in 1970. It now has 355 beds.

Webb made donations to residents who started the Sun City Prides and the Sun City Posse, organizations that further enhanced the community's appeal and benefited both the people and the company, Meeker said.

Housing sales gradually rose and peaked at 3,485 in 1977, an impressive clip of 20 a day.

With no land left, Webb's job was finished, and the firm divested itself of all Sun City holdings to invest in development of Sun City's little sister, Sun City West.

"If we can carry on the tradition established in Sun City, and so far in Sun City West, I think that's a worthwhile goal," said Paul Tatz, the development company's current president and chief operating officer.

Continued from SC2

In part, Johnson said, Webb decided to keep Sun City, because he liked the promise of constant profits from rental of the retail space in the shopping centers that the company built.

In addition, Meeker told Webb he could make Sun City succeed and, he said, Webb trusted him.

Webb's partner from the start, L.C. Jacobson, who had picked out the land for Sun City and arranged for its purchase from the J.G. Boswell Co., left Webb, along with Breen.

Meeker took over as president of the development firm, Childress became vice president, and Webb became more interested in the development of Sun City.

When Childress arrived, "there was kind of a negative attitude" among the residents and the Webb employees, he said.

The problems stemmed from "the philosophy that Webb should not be involved with the people," Meeker said.

As a result, the recreation centers were not being used to their potential, and residents weren't forming enough groups.

Continued on SC5

# Sun City Recalls 20 Years Of Growth

(Concluded from Page A-1)

recreational facilities and shopping center."

The Webb firm reported 237 homes already had been sold. And the prices were up a little.

Homes sold ranged in price from \$5,500 to \$11,300 with the average being close to \$10,000. The ones bordering the grassy fairways were going for \$9,750.

In November, 1959, the Webb Co. announced a nationwide contest to name the retirement community. Advertisements seeking a name appeared in 27 of the nation's largest newspapers.

The three top prizes were a two-bedroom home on the golf course, a fully improved fairway lot and a two-week vacation at the Hiway House Motor Hotel.

Participation was limited to persons 50 years of age or older.

"Sun City," the winning name, was suggested by five contestants. E.A. Britton of Eugene, Ore., won the two-bedroom house on the basis of a 25-word statement as to why Sun City was suggested. Second prize, a fairway lot, went to Sally Benson, then of Youngtown. Tied for third and each receiving a two-week vacation were Mrs. M.B. Shurber, of Flagstaff, Mae Culley, of Medicine Lodge, Kan., and Herbert Lindeman of Fort Wayne.

Phoenix and Arizona senior citizens were among the majority of the original buyers. However, a surprisingly

large number came from California. They also came from New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Colorado, Minnesota, Michigan, Texas, Iowa and New Mexico.

The first tenant of Sun City's original shopping center was Safeway.

By early April 1960, Sun City had its own post office. The first cacheted cover bearing the Sun City postmark was given by then Gov. Paul Fannin.

Thirty-one states were represented among Sun City's homeowners by May 1960. The first out-of-state resi-

dents to occupy their new home were George and Mae Bayne, formerly of Seattle, Wash., and more recently of Morro Bay, Calif. Bayne had retired after more than 35 years with Tidewater Oil Co.

By July 1960, more than 1,200 homes and cooperative apartments had been sold.

"The success of Sun City is undoubtedly due to the fact that recreation and service attractions were built before the homes," one writer pointed out.

"There is a community center with a swimming pool, shuffleboard courts, a bowling lawn, handicraft work rooms, and an 18-hole golf course.

"There is a restaurant and a shopping center. . ."

Cost of the homes was now between \$8,500 and \$12,250. Forty to 50 percent of the home sales were for cash.

"Of the people living in Sun City," the writer continued, "60 percent are completely retired. The average income of the retired group is \$5,450. Of the retired families, more than

half have an income higher than \$5,000, and only 14 percent have incomes of less than \$3,000. The average net worth of these retired families is \$50,000. The average family group in Sun City has a bank account containing more than \$6,000. The average age of these people is 62.5 years."

Sun City may have begun as a dream.

But who dreamed that on its 20th anniversary, the retirement "village" would consist of nearly 26,000 homes occupied by 48,000 or more retirees?

## Sun City: 20 Years Of Growth

BY KENNETH ARLINE  
Gazette Reporter

*Phoenix Gazette - January 1980*

Sun City:

It began as a dream in a cotton patch and an alfalfa field.

In the beginning, it didn't even have a name.

"A retirement community that will eventually have more than 1,600 homes" is the way one writer described the proposed development in September, 1959.

For \$8,000 to \$10,500, retirees could buy their dream house. One model was said to be the only \$9,000 home in America bordering on grassy fairways of a regulation golf course.

The houses would vary from two-

### Sun City Column, Page C-1

bedroom and bath with 900 square feet of living space to three bedrooms with two baths and 1,200 square feet of living area.

The Del E. Webb Construction Co. said the "village" would be a complete community for senior citizens, who, though retired or semi-retired, still are comparatively young and seeking a place to live in a community which will provide the facilities necessary to enjoy their "privileged years."

The initial development, the Webb firm stated, was to be on part of 20,000 acres recently acquired from the Boswell Farms.

Initially, 555 homes would be constructed.

Also, the first nine holes of an 18-hole golf course were already under construction and "land for the second nine holes" had been set aside.

"The commercial center, fronting in the main highway, will place shops and medical facilities within walking distance of the retirees' homes," a story noted. "Two nationally known firms already have contracted for space. . ."

Four months later, the community had a name and more than 100,000 senior citizens "jammed" the new development to "four the model homes,

Turn to SUN CITY, Page A-18

# Past serves as

ALBERT TUDOR  
SUN CITY

Others can worry about what dire consequences are in store for us when the clock strikes midnight of Dec. 31. I am not concerned with exactly where the new millennium will be first celebrated. Nor do I really care who were the sexiest, best dressed or undressed, most popular or most despicable people of the last century — let alone the last 1,000 years.

My concerns are much simpler. I wonder what's in store for our little corner of the world as we journey into the year 2000 and beyond. So, since the past is prologue to the future — because history has a way of repeating itself — let's see what has happened during the last quarter of the 20th century as we journey along the Old Vulture Road.

That was one name given to the wagon trail pioneered by Henry Wickenburg and others who journeyed from Wickenburg to Phoenix in the 1870s and 1880s. Most folks call it Grand Avenue or Highway 60.

As we begin this journey in 1976, Wickenburg's long-held title of "Dude Ranch Capital of the World" was voluntarily relinquished. To me, this was a strange decision because people have an unashamed love affair with the mystique of the cowboy, and willingly pay hundreds of dollars to savor "cowboy life." We may not go on a cattle drive or even an overnight trail ride, but we do want to rub shoulders with cowboys, cowgirls and all the trappings of the Old West.

That is one of Wickenburg's greatest appeals. Tourists enjoy the laid-back, small town atmosphere that has the unmistakable flavor of the Old West with the distinctive look of Arizona in the 1950s. Tens of thousands of people each year accept the chamber of commerce invitation to travel "Out Wickenburg Way." Many of them return as residents. The town has grown from about 3,000 people in 1976 to more than 5,000, and interest in Wickenburg has boomed since the town was awarded the No. 4 spot in the 1999 edition of Retirement Places Rated — ahead of 183 other communities.

Mayor Dallas "Rusty" Gant, Jr. admits that, "Along with growth come problems such as zoning and providing additional services from a small tax base." Another dilemma is how to correct the traffic jams that regu-



Albert F. "Al" Tudor of Sun City is author of "Along the Old Vulture Road," cattle tales and trails from Wickenburg to Phoenix.

larly frustrate drivers, pedestrians and business people alike.

A decision should be made early in 2000 on the route of a highway "bypass" that avoids downtown entirely. "You can imagine the divisiveness this has caused," Gant said.

Royce Kardinal, president of the Wickenburg Chamber of Commerce, emphasizes, "Wickenburg must preserve our unique historic downtown, which has great appeal to visitors. Keeping the trucks out will make the town more 'tourist-friendly' by reducing traffic congestion."

Kardinal, whose family came to Wickenburg in the 1920s, likens the impending bypass to the 1986 completion of the "Brenda cutoff," which gave travelers a direct route between Phoenix and Los Angeles on Interstate 10 — replacing the old U.S. 60 route through Wickenburg. "We weathered a few tough years then, and we will do the same with the bypass," she said.

Eleven miles south on the Vulture Road in Morristown, things haven't changed too much. The historic Morristown Store weathered another 25 years and reached the century mark. Proprietors John and Jean Hardee are still as sharp and interesting as ever. The three-story building was once a hotel whose wealthy guests stayed only a night before undertaking the arduous 24-mile by wagon to the luxurious Castle Hot Springs Resort. John's father bought the building in 1929, and it has been in the family ever since.

"The most important event in the town's history," says Jean, "was in the mid-70s when John signed the note that allowed Morristown to drill our



# prologue to future



PHOTO COURTESY OF SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sun Citians celebrate the nation's bicentennial in 1976.

own well and have water delivered to our homes." Before that, water came in by railroad tank cars and was dumped into a cistern, where the locals came for their water.

The quality of education at Morristown has improved, but the old school buildings have not. The 100 students and teachers are crammed into four tiny, decrepit buildings. The main classroom, in a century-old, former boarding house, seats only 14 pupils.

However, Morristown will get nearly \$2.4 million in state funds to build a schoolhouse to accommodate twice the current student population. When it's occupied, one old building will be torn down; the others saved as historic sites.

A world-class hotel that opened in 1896-97 for rich and famous guests, Castle Hot Springs Resort, burned down in 1976. In the years since, several people have spent fortunes trying to restore the resort to its former glory. The current owner has the interest, vision, ability and track record to put the Grand Old Lady back among America's grant hotels and resorts. Reopening is scheduled for 2001.

The biggest surprise along the historic Vulture Road has been the city of Surprise and its explosive growth. Mayor Joan Shafer indicated a patch of land just south of the city hall and said, "That's where it all began 70 years ago — in that one square mile of farmland. Being an agricultural community, Surprise got off to a slow start,

but we're on a fast track now."

Shafer proudly claims that Surprise is the fastest-growing city in Arizona. "The city area has grown from one square mile to 68 square miles. In the past 25 years, our population has mushroomed from 3,000 to more than 32,000."

Surprise has enjoyed phenomenal residential growth, with commercial activity beginning to keep pace. For years the main shopping area was Crossroads. It was joined recently by two others, and a third major center is planned for early 2000. The city is the home of West Valley Art Museum, an important cultural asset for the entire area.

The success of Del Webb's Sun Cities has been adequately chronicled in local and world media. We're fortunate that three Sun Cities blossomed right here along the Old Vulture Road.

Sun City Grand, located within the city of Surprise, opened in 1996. It will have a population of about 20,000. Sun City West began in 1978, and the last lots were sold this year. The population is about 32,000. Sun City models were unveiled Jan. 1, 1960, and 15 years later most of the land was built out. The current population is about 42,000.

Del Webb himself would be astounded at the tremendous impact that his Sun Cities have had on the communities all along Grand Avenue. In addition to the obvious economic boost from construction and development, the Sun Cities

have significant and far-reaching influence on the social, cultural, educational and political aspects of the Northwest Valley and beyond.

Much of this is due to the great spirit of voluntarism that permeates the Sun Cities. There is no better example than Jane Freeman. I call her the First Lady of Sun City. Dick Kemp, editor of Sun Life Magazine, says, "Without Jane Freeman, Sun City wouldn't be what it is today." I agree.

Jane is a doer as well as a leader. She stuffs envelopes, delivers meals and lugs books for library sales as readily as she serves as president or attends board meetings. The library, historical society, community council, meals on wheels, volunteer bureau and Sun Health's many branches are some that have had the benefit of Jane's tireless efforts.

Undoubtedly, there is a "Jane Freeman-type" in the other Sun Cities. However, I know Jane, and feel that she is well qualified to speak for the others. She was quick to respond to my query about the most significant things that have happened to this area in the last 25 years. "Two things readily come to mind," Jane replied. "First, the proliferation of options for seniors: independent or assisted living facilities, extended care or nursing homes and units for special needs such as Alzheimer's. In 1976, we had Sun Valley Lodge, and later Royal Oaks Life Care Center." Today, there are doz-

See Significant, Page 3

# Significant developments shape Sun Cities

## From Page 2

ens of retirement complexes and nursing homes that offer various types of retirement living and health care, according to Jane.

"The second significant occurrence is the vast network of adult health care, research and education facilities available to the people of this entire area," Jane said. "We are a recognized pioneer in geriatric health care. Sun Health — with its twin anchors of Boswell and Del Webb hospitals — has provided the leadership in making the quality and availability of senior health care a major asset to the northwest Valley."

Although Sun City gets most of the credit for being the original retirement community solely for people over 55, Youngtown came on the scene six years earlier, in 1954. However, in 1998, the state attorney general ruled that at least part of the age-restrictive zoning was illegal. The town council soon repealed most of the senior overlay zoning — opening Youngtown to all age groups. About 250 under age 18 now

live in Youngtown. But that may change, and Youngtown's population may double if plans materialize for a 160-acre development around an executive golf course.

The last 25 years were packed with spectacular events that transformed the once-sleepy farming community of Peoria into one of Arizona's major cities.

Two people who played key roles in shaping today's Peoria are Ron Travers and Ed Tang. They served many years on the city council, and each served three terms as mayor (Travers 1985-91 and Tang from 1979-85).

Both agree that major developments include:

- Peoria Sports Complex, spring training home of two major league baseball teams.
- The extensive retail and

commercial development along Bell Road.

- The modern City Hall complex.

Travers also points to other main growth factors such as Loop 101, that courses through miles of Peoria, and the 1988 annexation that extended Peoria north to Lake Pleasant. Tang cites the many services offered since 1980 at the Community Center, as well as Peoria's first housing development for the elderly.

Priscilla Cooke, whose husband was a mayor in the 1970s, has both feet firmly planted in Peoria's past and present. For years, she has worked tirelessly to persuade city councils to preserve the past while revitalizing the present downtown Peoria. Both crusades have been successful.

The Peoria Arizona Historical Museum is housed in the original elementary school, and downtown got a face lift this year.

Glendale continues to be one of the fastest growing cities in Arizona and the nation. During this period, the Sahuaro and Manistee ranch houses were saved and renovated; a new municipal complex and a modern airport were built; and the city's centennial was celebrated in 1992. With explosive expansion of area and population, Glendale still manages to maintain a pleasing blend of the old with the new.

It's mind-boggling to reflect on what has happened to the

old Vulture Road since Henry Wickenburg pioneered this horse and wagon trail between Wickenburg and Phoenix. The greatest shock is to find that the tiny settlement that in 1870 became Phoenix has now become the nation's sixth largest city.

If history remains true to form, it will be even more incredible to look back in the year 2100 and ponder the changes that fate and mankind have wrought on this historic highway that we call Grand Avenue.

So, a fond *adios* to the fascinating 20th century, and a warm *howdy* to the 21st.

## HEARING AIDS

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THOSE WERE THE DAYS ... 1979

Pope John Paul II travels to U.S., first time a pope sets foot on American soil. Mother Teresa accepts Nobel Peace Prize.

U.S. Embassy in Tehran is taken hostage; two are soon released, the rest are held captive for 444 days.

First cellular phone network in Japan.

President Jimmy Carter and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev sign the SALT II agreement limiting strategic weapons.

Three Mile Island energy plant in Pennsylvania shuts down after nuclear accident.

Margaret Thatcher becomes Britain's first woman prime minister.

1980

Sony Walkman tape player starts a fad.

CNN starts 24-hour news channel.

Veteran newsman reflects on Oval Office holders

JOSH KRIST DAILY NEWS-SUN

The United States has gone through five presidents this last quarter of a century.

Gerald Moriarity has interviewed them all during his long journalism career.

Truman and Reagan vie for his pick on the best president of the century.

"I'd almost lean toward Reagan. He lifted the hopes of the American people," Moriarity said.

"I thought he was a master. He really brought everybody's hopes up for a greater America," he said.

But when asked about his favorite president, or the wittiest, or the best-dressed, Moriarity keeps mentioning Kennedy.

"The word charisma was invented for him," Moriarity said.

"He was one of my favorite persons, the guy I would like to pal around with," he said.

His least favorite president was Lyndon Johnson. Moriarity likes to quote George Reedy, a Marquette University professor



E.B. MCGOVERN/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Jerry Moriarity of Sun City West has interviewed the past 10 presidents of the United States.



THOSE WERE THE DAYS ... 1976

Jimmy Carter is elected 39th president of the U.S.

The U.S. celebrates its 200th birthday.

28 people die in Philadelphia of mysterious virus dubbed "Legionnaire's disease."

"Rocky" is top movie of the year.

Women are admitted to Air Force Academy.

1977

Vietnam draft dodgers are pardoned.

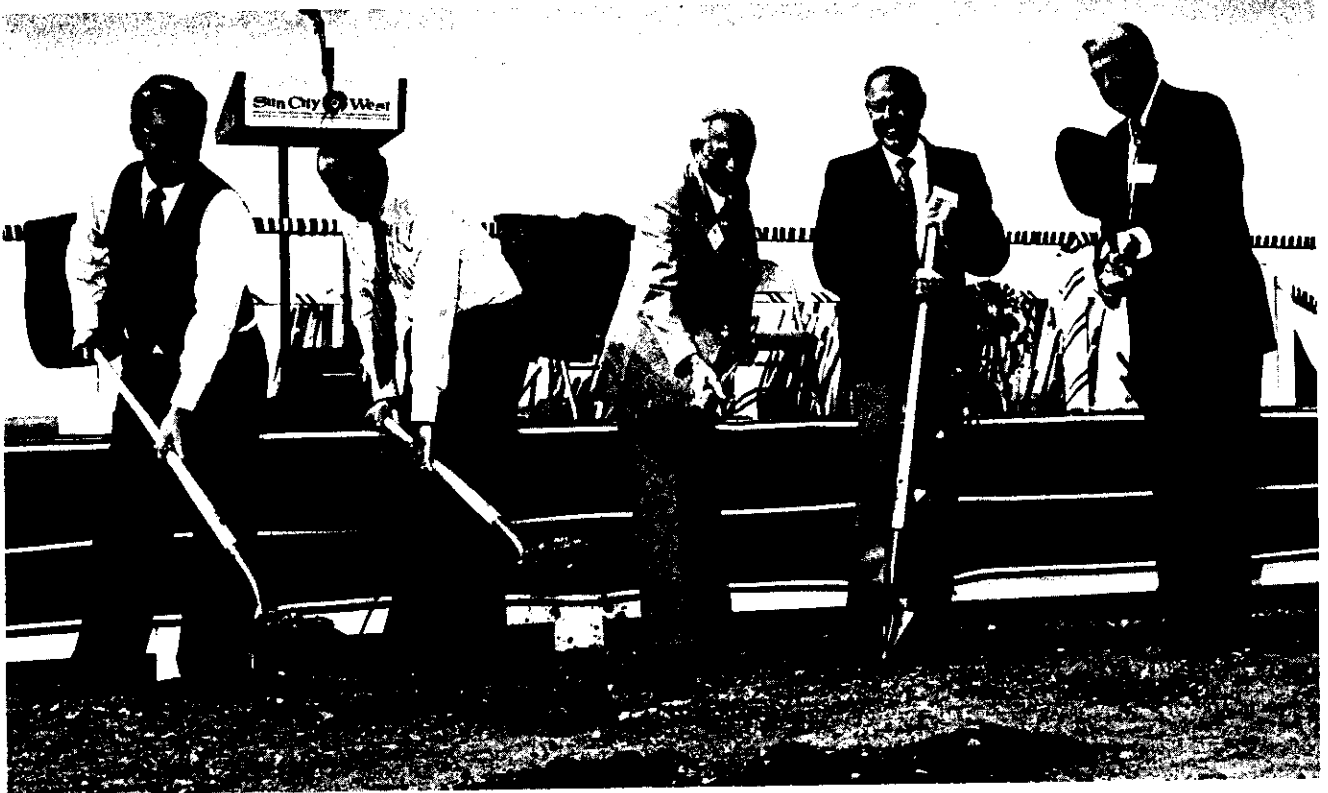
Elvis Presley dies

Trans-Alaska Pipeline begins.

A collision between two jumbo jets in the Canary Islands is the worst aviation disaster in history, killing 574 people.

"Star Wars," "Close Encounters of the

1 9 7 6 - 1 9 7 8



PRIOR TO THE 200-person groundbreaking at Sun City West, chief speakers had some fun moving dirt. From left: Devco President John Meeker; Arizona Senator Dennis DeConcini; Hank

Raymond, vice-president of the J. G. Boswell Company, land holder and partner with Webb in Sun City; Webb Chairman R. H. Johnson and Arizona Governor Wesley Bolin.

## At Sun City—First The Official Words, Then Some Fun

Following are selected quotes from remarks by the principals pictured above:

**Wesley Bolin** — "The State of Arizona wishes Del Webb every success."

**Dennis DeConcini** — "Del Webb epitomizes the success for which Arizona is known."

**R. H. Johnson** — "We are used to amazing things happening in Sun City. To imagine that less than 10 years ago, Sun City was a community of 12,000 people south of Grand Avenue. Today it is Arizona's seventh largest city, 43,000 population.

"Mr. Webb would be proud to see what Sun City has become. But he would not have been surprised — because at his passing in 1974, his dream had been realized.

"Although Mr. Webb took keen interest in Sun City, the community's growth and progress have come primarily through the vision, creativity and initiative of John Meeker and his staff.

"Now, as Sun City nears completion, John and his associates have conceived a new master plan and are ready to begin its development. John, we look forward to the grand opening ceremonies. Sun City West, like its predecessor should be something very special to see and experience. Thank you."

**Hank Raymond** — "Thank you, John. "I'm pleased to have the opportunity of representing the J. B. Boswell Company and President Jim Boswell in these ceremonies that

mark the start of a brand new city of which Arizona will be proud.

"I say this with confidence because we have Sun City as an example of what the Del Webb Development Co. can do. It has transformed farmland into one of the most magnificent communities in the United States.

"Now the Webb Company will use its expertise and 18 years of experience to create for mature Americans another unique and modern city."

**John Meeker** — "Suddenly society is taking a new fresh look at older Americans, their elders, and saying maybe the best is yet to be — after all.

"Older people really are very much alive and vibrant. I guess the Sun City message is getting through.

"Eighteen years ago, when society in general was saying 'old' is a time of uselessness and inactivity, Del E. Webb and his associates were creating 'an active new way of life' for those mature adults who refused to listen to such nonsense.

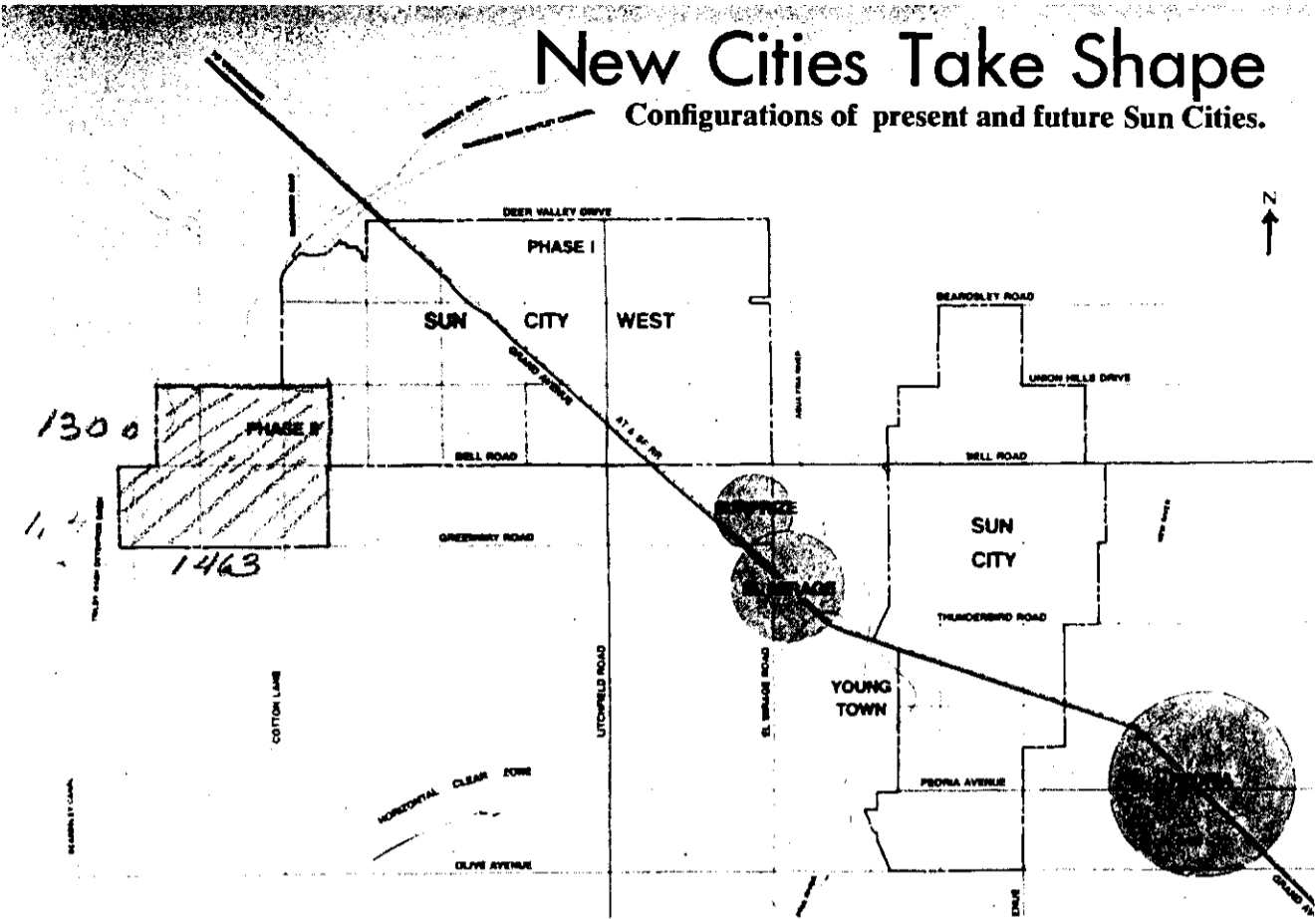
"And in 18 years they succeeded in taking what the Webb Company had built and made it a dynamic thriving city for seniors. And you know what comes after your senior year — Commencement — a new beginning.

"Sun Citians continue to achieve, contribute and enjoy life to the fullest. What an inspiration they are to others and to us. Finally, they are making us all realize you can be old chronologically but young physically and psychologically.

"Age is an attitude."

# New Cities Take Shape

Configurations of present and future Sun Cities.



## Present Facilities

These were among facilities as Sun City marked its 18th birthday with a population of approximately 43,000:

**Six recreation complexes.** Residents pay ~~300~~<sup>40</sup> per year per person for use of facilities. They own the recreation centers and have set up a non-profit corporation with paid staff to govern and maintain them. To provide an orderly pattern of use of their facilities, Sun Citians have formed over 300 clubs and organizations.

**Ten 18-hole golf courses.** Three are private country clubs. Of the seven public courses, two are par 60 executive type courses.

**Sun City's Sun Bowl.** A 7,500 capacity outdoor amphitheater, grass-terraced and with shell-type stage. 'Top Stars' have performed here.

**Sun City Stadium.** Spring training headquarters for the Milwaukee Brewers and home field for the Sun City

Saints, a women's amateur softball team.

**Sixteen restaurants.**

**Twenty-five religious organizations.** These meet in their own house of worship or in community rooms.

**Thirty branch banks and savings and loan companies, plus five brokerage houses.**

**Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital.** This modern medical facility with 200 beds in constructing a third nursing tower. When the \$10 million project is completed, Boswell will have 261 beds.

**Sun Valley Lodge.** A nursing and health care facility operated by the United Church of Sun City.

**Beverly Manor Convalescent Center.** This 165-bed care facility is expected to open in December.

**Sunshine Service.** Provides medical and sick room equipment, wheel chairs, emergency beds, children's equipment and many other services on a free-loan basis to residents.

**Lakes Club.** This private dining facility on Viewpoint Lake has a large

dining room with dance area, cocktail lounge and bar, and 500 capacity ballroom.

**Heading Ranch.** Location of Sun City's trap and skeet range, small bore rifle and pistol range and archery lists. Also has a large picnic area with covered cabanas, tables and benches, water, barbeques and dance floor.

**Agricultural Gardens.** The Webb Company furnishes 20 X 40 plots free, plus water.

**Trailer Compound.** Residents have enclosed park for trailers, campers, boats, etc., at a minimal annual fee.

**Rancho Estates.** Features homes on acre or larger lots, ranch-fenced corrals, optional stalls and tack room, and bridle paths leading to the nearby Agua Fria dry river bed.

**Sun City's Heritage Home Show.** Offers 21 different floor plans featuring four distinctive modes of living. Included are single family homes, duplexes, garden apartments, and four-somes. Prices range from \$40,990 to \$77,490.



**ONLY SEVERAL DAYS** after it opened, on Jan. 3, 1960, when this aerial photo snapped by Jerry McLain showed lines of traffic waiting to park, Sun City seemed on its way to success.

Before, no one was certain what would happen to the multi-million dollar Webb investment. (See story below.)

## Sun City, Arizona A Question Mark Before Opening

There's a new edition in the saga of America's most amazing and successful real estate venture. The latest version, titled "Sun City West," will be finished when 13,000 acres are completely developed by the Webb Corporation.

Success is not in doubt.

Contrary to its sister community, which opened on the faith of Webb planners, Sun City West has already registered thousands of potential buyers.

### No Sun City West Doubters

No one doubted last December when a core area was announced to include an 18-hole golf course, rec center, shopping center and a 7,000-seat domed center.

No one questioned a press release which said the first 5,700-acre phase would accommodate 32,500 people in 17,000 housing units, with construction exceeding \$1 billion.

Or that jobs for approximately 55,588 workers would generate \$662 million in wages.

### How It Was In 1959

The Webb Corporation was 32 years old, nationally known in construction circles, when it announced Sun City in mid-1959.

Earlier in the decade the firm had launched a multi-state motel chain (HiwayHouse), completed an entire town (San Manuel, Ariz.), built and co-owned the first Phoenix shop-

ping center (Uptown Plaza) and developed a number of respectable housing tracts in Arizona.

Before opening, Webb completed at Sun City a motel, model homes and apartments, a golf course and recreation complex and a shopping center.

### National Ad Campaign

It conducted a national advertising campaign to name the town and attract buyers (a period which happily coincided with the Valley's largest in-migration to that date).

Yet, with all indicators positive, with proof Webb had previously succeeded in every ingredient of community development, no one was prepared for Sun City's success.

Arizona's largest newspaper did not assign a reporter to the grand opening.

### People Had Been Noticing

People, however, had been taking notice.

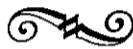
They wanted to check out a project billed as offering "An Active New Way of Life," and being touted in radio jingles which began, "Wake Up and Live In Sun City!"

During a four-day grand opening — Dec. 31, 1959, and Jan. 1, 2 and 3, 1960 — traffic was snarled waiting to enter the project.

(Continued on Page 7)



SUN CITY used excellent marketing tools upon opening, including a 6 by 12-foot floor model of first facilities and homes (shown at right). Today it would be dwarfed by Sun City West's 20 square foot model, seen above.



## Even Sociologists Are Becoming 'True Sun City Believers'

(Continued from Page 6)

Attitude Turns Favorable

Sales for the long weekend were 272 units . . . a very impressive beginning.

### National Media Take Note

National media was sometimes less than enthusiastic. *Life* and *Look* magazines did favorable photo features. In 1962, *Time Magazine* featured Del E. Webb on its cover, and described in detail the builder and the town he founded. *Time* described the Webb corporation as "the nation's leading builder of retirement cities," a role it has never relinquished.

### Sociologists Sometimes Criticized

Yet for every *Life*, *Look* and *Time* article, a sociologist found a national forum to criticize Sun City and its residents for moving to a town where new home sales barred school age children (welcome, however, to visit grandparents and use recreation facilities) and for "retreating from reality."

It wasn't long, however, before Sun City groups were receiving publicity for generosity toward the less fortunate among themselves and to those in surrounding communities.

One 1973 survey, for example, revealed a small group (38 women) had already raised \$68,000 in cash for needy children. If not on so large a scale, dozens of similar examples were revealed.

Others served in non-paying civic, church and governmental capacities.

Fewer and fewer so-called experts were terming Sun City a "geriatric ghetto."

Today Sun Citians are welcomed for their contributions in talents and taxes, and Sun City is now better received among sociologists.

About Sun City, the *Christian Science Monitor* wrote in December: "Success breeds success. And what success has bred in Sun City, one of the country's pioneer planned retirement communities, is the 'sold out' sign."

When the Webb Corporation officially announced Sun City West in December the *Arizona Republic* opened an editorial this way:

"Having developed one fabulously successful Sun City in Arizona, the Del E. Webb Development Co. is going for two."



NATIONAL magazines soon recognized Sun City. Examining an August, 1962 cover story on Del Webb were Sun City residents Dr. and Mrs. Chester Meade.

**#1 On The Jingle Parade**

For several years in the early 1960s, the best known radio advertising tune in the Valley of the Sun was "Wake Up And Live In Sun City."

YOUR  
DEL WEBB'S  
**Sun City**  
SONG

Famous for  
active retirement  
**33 1/3 RPM**

Arizona's fastest  
growing town

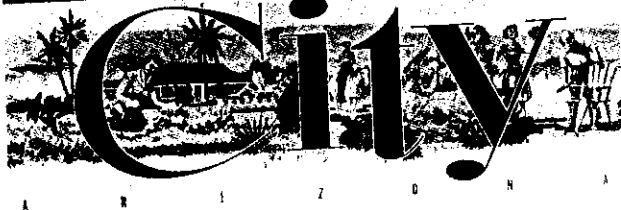
**"WAKE UP AND LIVE  
IN SUN CITY"**

Wake up and live in Sun City, for an active new way of life.  
Wake up and live in Sun City, Mr. Senior Citizen and Wife.  
Don't let retirement get you down.  
Be happy in Sun City, its a paradise town.  
Wake up and live in Sun City.  
Mr. Senior Citizen, the best of your life.  
Mr. Senior Citizen and Wife.





# How We Looked In Print



A R I Z O N A

*"Concrete, steel and lumber can make the buildings, but People make the community. Together we can realize a Way-Of-Life unprecedented in America."*

Del E. Webb  
President

ORIGINAL SUN CITY brochure cover is reproduced at top. Immediately above is a prophetic quote by Del Webb, part of the brochure's introduction, which became a truth now widely recognized.

## 'We Remember It Well'



JOHN MEEKER, right, and Owen Childress reminisce about Dec. 31, 1959, at Sun City West groundbreaking luncheon.

We asked Devco President John Meeker and Webb Exec. Vice-Pres. Owen Childress, who played key roles in the first Sun City, to sum up their feelings as Webb launched a billion dollar phase of expansion.

**John Meeker** — "In my fondest dreams I could not envision the progress that would occur during the next 18 years. Little did we know the number of lives that we would affect, touch or change when this new community was started.

"Because of the courage of our company to undertake and fulfill all its promises, thousands of people have been able to enjoy more meaningful and happy retirement years.

"These past 18 years have been a most rewarding experience for me personally and I hope I will be able to continue to be involved with the dynamic development of Sun City West."

\* \* \*

**Owen Childress** — "I remember that John Meeker and I spent New Year's Eve putting the final touches on the sales office in preparation for Sun City's opening the following day. As we were leaving the project, and had just locked the sales office door, almost as if by a signal we turned to each other and asked the same question: 'Do you think anybody will come?'

"The answer to that question, of course, is history and is certainly demonstrated in what I think everyone will agree is the premier retirement community in the world.

"Also a reward I have gotten from Sun City, over and above the pride in being associated with an operation which has been successful for the Company, has to do with the residents themselves.

"I can remember talking to one couple who had just finished signing their sales agreement, and were very excited. The husband was so racked with arthritis that he could barely sign the sales agreement.

"I remember the warm feeling I received when by chance some eight or nine months later I happened to run into them on the golf course. They had just finished playing the first nine holes of golf they had ever played.

"Seeing years added to this gentleman's life, as well as other Sun City residents I have come in contact with, is something I will carry with me for many years to come."

## Fun Run In Sun City Sun Citians Living Up To Their 'Active' Reputation!

On Feb. 12, more than 400 people gave new meaning to the word "active" in Sun City's original slogan.

They walked, jogged and ran in Sun City's first annual 5,000 meter "Fun Run."

Winner was Les Hebert, 43, of Phoenix. He ran the 3 1/8-mile back street "course" in 19:05, averaging 6 1/3 minutes per mile.

In the 50-59 age bracket, the winners were Clair Decker of Glendale, 20:00, and Norma Richardson of Tempe 30:04.

In the 60-69 year class, the winning marks were set by Richard Elton, 21:49, and Edna Laffin, 28:40, both of Sun

City.

In the 70-79 year class, winners were "Mac" McLeod, 23:02, of Mesa, and Mia Wilhusen, 39:05, of Sun City.

The previous day a three-hour physical fitness seminar included an address by 70-year-old "Mac" McLeod of Mesa, winner of his age bracket in the Sun City contest, who recently completed the 26-mile Hawaii Marathon.

McLeod had been averaging 2500 miles per month, and last November completed 24,000 miles of running.

Also speaking at the seminar, open and free to the public, were three doctors and a nurse.



SCENES FROM Sun City's first annual 5,000 meter "Fun Run."

# Highlights

The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office District III Substation at Dysart and Bell roads was opened in May 1982. The main responsibility of 31 deputies assigned to the district was the Sun Cities area.

Five detectives and a full-time civilian were assigned to District III and three of those worked solely in Sun City.

In 1985, Sun City was divided into four beat areas and four deputies worked those beats.

● ● ●  
In the spring of 1980, the Sun City PRIDES went to work to keep the community clean.

● ● ●  
On May 6, 1983, Ronald Reagan visited Sun City. Hundreds lined the streets to catch a glimpse of the president as he honored the Sun City Posse.

● ● ●  
In December 1983, no-smoking policies were implemented at all recreation centers, a decision that sparked controversy among members.

● ● ●  
In the fall of 1984, Mari-  
nette Recreation Center  
opened. The last of seven  
multi-purpose centers was  
built to accommodate Sun  
City's growing population.

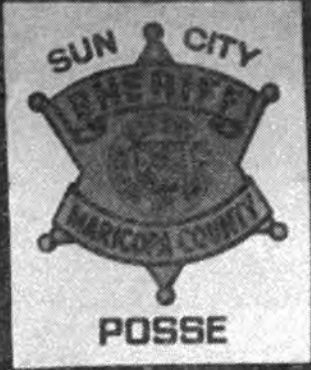
● ● ●  
On May 15, 1986, Sundial  
Center was closed. Roof  
repairs of \$1.3 million topped  
the center's fix-it list.

● ● ●  
On June 24, 1988, the Sun  
City school tax was imposed.  
It later was ruled unconstitu-  
tional and pulled from the law-  
books by Arizona legislators.

● ● ●  
The Sun City Fire Board  
severed ties with Rural/Metro  
Corp. on Jan. 1, 1989.

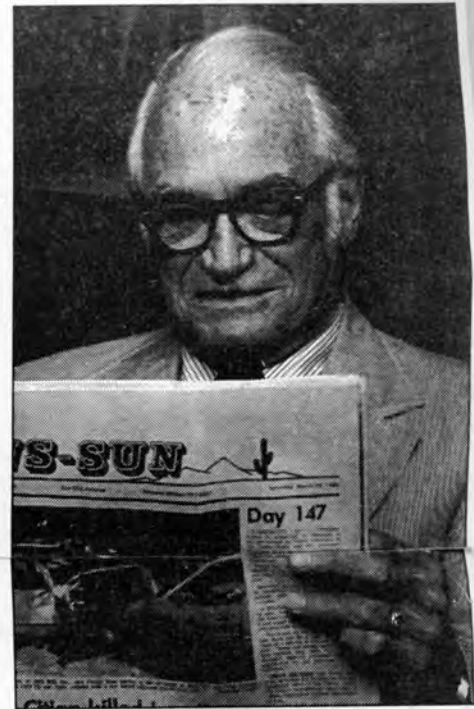
● ● ●  
The minimum age for Sun  
City residency was increased  
from 50 to 55 on Aug. 10,  
1989, by the Maricopa Coun-  
try Board of Supervisors.

● ● ●  
On Nov. 5, 1989, the Sun  
City Visitors Center opened.



# The '80s

## Sun City reaches completion



JIM PAINTER/DAILY NEWS-SUN

The late Sen. Barry Goldwater was a frequent visitor to Sun City and the offices of the Daily News-Sun, where he perused the paper's coverage of the Iran hostage situation in March 1980.

JIM PAINTER/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Former President Ronald Reagan visited Sun City on May 6, 1983, to praise the efforts of the Sun City Posse.

A woman awaits the vote of the Sun City Fire Board in 1988 to start a self-managed fire department.



# A wide array of living styles

From the very beginning, Sun City offered housing to accommodate people at any level of health

BRUCE ELLISON  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

When homes in Sun City first were offered to the public in 1960, there was only a handful of models — and they were all one-story, single-family homes on relatively small lots.

But over the 40 years since, a variety of housing styles has appeared, some of them offered by the Del Webb Corp., and others — a few — by private developers.

Facilities for those who could no longer live alone were among the first new housing types. They developed as church leaders realized there would need to be a community answer to that problem of aging.

Remember that in the 1960s, life expectancy at the normal retirement age of 65 was only a few additional years.

Sun Valley Lodge and Royal Oaks are two examples of that type of housing.

But in the early years, in Phase I south of Grand Avenue, the Del Webb Development Co. (Devco) experimented with other housing types.

There's a set of two-story units overlooking South Golf Course near Fairway Recreation Center, for instance; and some



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO

In 1963, members of the United Church of Sun City stand on the future site of Sun Valley Lodge.

Peoria Avenue off 106th Avenue near the Sun Bowl.

There's even a large tract with three- and four-acre lots, outbuildings and separate garages and adjacent pastures where horses graze. Yes, in Sun City. (It's called Rancho Estates, west of 111th Avenue south of Peoria Avenue.)

But there aren't a lot of any of them, for the Del Webb folks eventually concluded that the single-family home was where it was at.

However, after Webb completed the community about 20 years ago, it became apparent that other housing lifestyles would be needed as residents aged.



STEVED CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Luxurious condos such as the Heritage Palmeras attract retirees who no longer want the responsibility of home ownership.

from what were then called retirement homes to nursing homes, assisted living facilities and apartment complexes.

Of course, as the community expanded over 20 years, housing styles changed: homes became larger, with more amenities and accessories.

By the time Webb was working on Phase III, north of Bell Road, you could spend \$100,000 for a Sun City home.

And you certainly can today, as golf course lots command a \$20,000 premium while the few lake lots available bring even more.

Older homes are fast being remodeled and upgraded, as a trip around the community's side streets will document.

Some retirees even make a

homes, upgrading them, and reselling them at a profit.

The result is that newcomers can find a variety of styles and sizes. Even the Baby Boomers who might afford Sun City Grand or Scottsdale have moved in.

When it comes to housing today, new arrivals just starting a retirement lifestyle and those having a hard time living on their own have all the choices they had before, and then some.

Here's a look at some choices available in this 40-year-old, but still vibrant, community:

● New homes are one thing now missing in Sun City, though they can be found in Sun City Grand and other nearby master-planned com-

out, with perhaps a few odd spots available for the odd home.

● Existing homes are on the market regularly in Sun City. Prices range from the mid-\$50s for one-bedroom condos to a quarter million dollars for an opulent home on a golf course lot. One Sun City property changed hands last year at just below \$300,000.

● Rentals. There are fewer rental options in the Sun City than in most big cities. Many condo units now are owned by individual investors and offered for winter visitors or on a year-round basis, but not all condos permit rentals.

In the south part of Sun City, just off 99th Avenue north of Olive Avenue, are two large rental complexes.

At first glance, looking at the structures and their location, many residents would say they are in Peoria, but they're not. They are officially part of Sun City, were built by Webb, and carry recreation centers privileges.

Individuals, sometimes after inheriting them, often rent out single-family homes; they are cheaper on a year-round basis than monthly in season.

There is a limited number of new rental apartments in major complexes. One example is the Fountains in Sun City, off 111th Avenue and Grand.

● Independent Living. Rental apartments are called independent living facilities if they provide meal service or limited other services such as changes of linen, maid service or scheduled or on-demand

# Sun Bowl

From Page 58

Devco was building Sun City's Phase I.

Under Meeker's leadership, the company offered the Sun Bowl for sale to the rec centers.

"I did that before I left," said Meeker, who died earlier this year. "We were phasing out of Sun City and a decision had to be made whether they wanted it, or we'd sell it," he said.

Because the Sun Bowl had become a part of the community and because the facility had been created for the "use of all Sun City residents," Meeker said he had "felt strongly it was their (Rec Centers) shot to call, whether they wanted it."

After a 1981 canvassing by the rec centers of its membership showed member interest in the facility, an additional \$2-a-year Sun Bowl-dedicated fee was added to members' \$50 annual assessment.

On Sept. 1, 1984, the Rec Centers paid Devco a consideration fee of \$10 after having operated the Sun Bowl under a \$1-a-year, three-year lease/option to buy contract signed July 7, 1981.



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTOS

Wisconsinites have packed the Sun Bowl for their annual party since the outdoor amphitheater was completed Nov. 28, 1966.



Entertainer Victor Borge, above, tickles the ivories for a Sun Bowl crowd. Pat Boone, left, dazzles an audience on March 6, 1973.

**T**he Kings Inn Restaurant, dating from the founding of Sun City, was closed and razed in 1990.

● ● ●  
In 1990, Sun City landed a Senior Professional Baseball League franchise.

● ● ●  
Michael Drummond died in 1990. Drummond, a former grocery-store worker in Sun City, was the first person to receive an artificial heart followed by a human heart transplant.

● ● ●  
A nationwide comparative study of cost containment in community hospitals published July 31, 1995, in "Modern Healthcare" magazine ranked Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital No. 1 and Del E. Webb Memorial Hospital No. 6 overall.

● ● ●  
In September 1995, the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City hoped its new speed radar system would create awareness among speeders.

● ● ●  
On Jan. 17, 1996, GOP presidential contender Steve Forbes visited Sun City.

● ● ●  
On Feb. 21, 1996, another candidate, Pat Buchanan, was the clear favorite of the crowd of about 400 Sun Cities area residents.

● ● ●  
On Aug. 14, 1996, Daily News-Sun readers who responded to a questionnaire identified what they considered the top campaign issues of 1996. Social Security, tax-code simplification, crime, campaign-finance reform and illegal immigration were the top national issues.

● ● ●  
On Sept. 12, 1996, a crowd of about 3,000 cheered President Bill Clinton as he visited Sundial Recreation Center Auditorium while on his 1996 presidential campaign. The cheers also included some laughs as the 50-year-old commander-in-chief joked about having just received his



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

# The '90s:

A community basks in the warm glow of its first 40 years



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

anner welcomes President Clinton to the Sundial Auditorium on Sept. 11, 1996.



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO

Skaters continue to be drawn to the roller rink at Mountain View Auditorium in the '90s.





SUN CITY

FACT SHEET

August 1, 1980 *Latest one*

1. Sun City opened in January of 1960. Over 100,000 visitors viewed the new community during the premiere, and 272 homes were sold the first weekend.

SALES. . .

That initial year ended with sales of 1,301 homes and apartments.

Sales for 1977 totalled 4,189 with a valuation of \$204,041,866.

POPULATION. . .

The community now has more than 48,000 residents, making it the seventh largest community in Arizona.

2. ORIGINAL FACILITIES. . .

Prior to opening, Sun City already had:

- A. A Recreation Center with swimming pool, lawn bowling greens, shuffleboard courts, auditorium, club and meeting rooms and hobby studios.
- B. Nine holes of the first golf course, with the second nine holes under construction.
- C. Grand Shopping Center.
- D. Motor hotel with restaurant.
- E. Model homes.

3. PRESENT FACILITIES. . .

- A. Seven recreation complexes.

They offer the following facilities:

1. Seven swimming pools (one indoor).
2. 8 lawn bowling greens
3. 72 shuffleboard courts (18 air-conditioned, indoor).

4. Four miniature golf courses.
5. Studios for almost every kind of hobby or craft.
6. Card and meeting rooms.
7. Exercise rooms.
8. Therapy pools.
9. Five auditoriums (one with 1,800 capacity).
10. 13 tennis courts.
11. Picnic area with scenic waterfall, cabanas, barbeques.
12. 32 Bowling Lanes.
13. Bocci and horseshoe courts.
14. Boating and fishing lake.
15. Pool and billiards rooms.

Bell Recreation Center features a 40,000-volume library and the community's first handball, racquetball and volleyball courts.

Residents currently pay \$40 per year per person for use of these facilities.

(Exception: A minimal line rate is charged for bowling and nominal "club fees" are charged for lawn bowling and the use of certain arts and crafts facilities).

Residents own the recreation centers and have set up a non-profit corporation with paid staff to govern and maintain them. To provide an orderly pattern of use of their facilities, Sun Citians have formed over 300 clubs and organizations in the categories of civic, church, charitable, recreation and service.

- B. Eleven golf courses, ten 18-hole layouts and one 9-hole. Three of these are private country clubs. Of the eight community courses, three are par-60 executive courses, the other five are full sized par-72 layouts.
- C. Sun City's Sun Bowl is a 7,500-capacity outdoor amphitheater, grass-terraced with a shell-type stage. Top stars who have performed here include Liberace, Jimmy Durante, Guy Lombardo, Al Hirt,

- Lawrence Welk and his Champagne Music Makers, Henry Mancini, Roger Williams, Pete Fountain, Roberta Peters and many others. This facility will be superceded in September 1980 with the opening of the spectacular 7,169-seat Sundome Center for the Performing Arts in Sun City West. The Sundome, boasting a sound and acoustical system that will make everyone think he's sitting front row center, will host some 120 shows during the 1980-81 season.
- D. Sun City Stadium is spring training headquarters for the American League Milwaukee Brewers and home field for the Sun City Saints, a nationally-known women's amateur softball team.
- E. Lakeview and Bell Center Lanes are modern, completely automated, 16-lane bowling facilities. They feature the new electronically computerized scoring machines.
- F. Six major shopping centers. There are now approximately 350 businesses and professional offices in the community.
- G. 16 fine restaurants, plus nine golf course and bowling alley coffee shops and three dining rooms in private clubs.
- H. 35 religious organizations meet in their own house of worship or in community rooms. (27 have built their own houses of worship).
- I. 16 branch banks and 23 savings and loan offices, plus 5 brokerage houses.
- J. Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital, a modern medical facility with <sup>271</sup> 261 beds. The circular patient wings with centrally located nursing stations provide visual monitoring and quick access to every room. The hospital is designed for expansion to 400 rooms. *New tower added 8/4*
- K. Seven medical buildings. The largest provides 100,000 square feet of useable office space for doctors, dentists, laboratories, pharmacies, x-ray offices and other medical technicians.

1980

- L. Sun Valley Lodge, a nursing and health care facility operated by the United Church of Sun City.
- M. Beverly Manor Convalescent Center, a new 195-bed care facility, features three 65-bed wings, two for skilled nursing and one for personal care.
- N. The Carillons, an 84-unit catered living facility for residents who wish to maintain individuality and independence, yet have necessary services available under the same roof.
- O. Sunshine Service provides medical and sick room equipment, wheel chairs, emergency beds and children's equipment and many other services on a free-loan basis to residents.
- P. Lakes Club, a private dining facility on Viewpoint Lake. It has a large dining room with dance area, cocktail lounge and bar, and 500-capacity ballroom.
- Q. Heading Ranch, the location of Sun City's trap and skeet range, small bore rifle and pistol range and archery lists.
- R. Agricultural Gardens, where residents are assigned 20 x 40 plots where they can grow vegetable gardens. The Webb Company furnishes the land and water.
- S. Trailer compound provides residents with enclosed park for trailers, campers, boats, etc. at a minimal annual fee.
- T. Rancho Estates features homes on acre or larger lots, ranch-fenced corrals, option stalls and tack room, and bridal paths leading to the nearby Agua Fria river bed. Stables are also available west of Riverview Golf Course for horse owners living in other parts of Sun City.

- U. Bell Plaza, an office building complex consisting of the Del E. Webb Development Company Administrative Office and an identical rental office building.
- V. Sun City West Model Home Show offers 20 different floor plans featuring four distinctive modes of living. Included are single family homes, duplexes, patio apartments, and garden apartments. Basic prices range from \$56,990 to \$112,990 (subject to change without notice).

#### 4. SUN CITY WEST. . .

With Sun City's development nearly completed, the Del E. Webb Development Company has built a new resort-retirement community - Sun City West. Like its sister city to the east, Sun City West is a complete environment tailored to the needs and desires of persons 50 years of age and older. Standing by its conviction that active retirement lends immeasurable quality to one's mature years, the Webb Company has created in Sun City West a community abundant in cultural, creative and recreational opportunities.

#### 5. VACATION SPECIAL . . .

Sun City West offers a one-week introductory vacation (2 weeks May 1 to December 15) in a lovely, furnished apartment for \$200 (\$275 if a return visit). Husband or wife must be 50 years or older. The vacation package includes guest activity card for use of recreation facilities, two rounds of golf, steak dinner, buffet breakfast and tour of Sun City and Sun City West. Rates will increase December 15, 1980 to \$225 for introductory visit and \$300 for return visit (i.e. these new rates are now in effect for apartment occupancy on and after December 16, 1980).

SUN CITY

PROGRESS STORY

AUGUST 15, 1978

Only two decades ago the area 12 miles northwest of Phoenix, Ariz., was largely uninhabited. Instead of people, there flourished thousands of acres of cotton and lettuce.

Today the area is the site of Arizona's seventh largest city--Sun City--the world's premiere resort-retirement community and the place some 45,000 persons proudly call home.

The nearly 20-year span in between has been characterized by a commitment that active retirement lends immeasurable quality to one's after-50 years. It's also been characterized by growth, growth so phenomenal, in fact, that sometime during the next 12 months the last house in Sun City will be occupied and by early fall 1978 the sister-community of Sun City West is expected to welcome its first residents.

Sun City was the brainchild of the late Del E. Webb, who had parlayed a hammer and saw into a multi-million dollar corporation with interests ranging from construction and land development to hotel operations and property management.

Knowing that persons of retirement-age were more interested in the present than in promises, Webb had built a complete recreation center, a golf course, a shopping center and a hotel with restaurant before the first home was even sold.

The community was an immediate success. During the first week-end of the January, 1960, opening, 272 homes were sold. Thousands of visitors flocked in to see what this new city had to offer America's retirees.

At year-end home sales totaled 1,301 and the community had a population of 2,500. By 1965 the population had risen to 8,000 and it jumped to 15,000 by 1970.



Community facilities have kept pace with this rapid growth. Sun City now has six recreation centers, with construction on a seventh to begin this year.

In planning new recreation complexes, several things are taken into consideration. Population growth and frequency of use of existing facilities point up certain needs. The wishes of the residents, determined through surveys, also are used in rec centers planning.

The first recreation center had a swimming pool, shuffleboard courts, a lawn bowling green, arts and crafts studios, meeting and card rooms and an auditorium.

The later complexes include many of these facilities, and have added things like bowling lanes, miniature golf courses, exercise rooms, weaving rooms, pool and billiard areas, therapy baths, tennis, ping pong, bocci ball, lakes for boating and fishing and a picnic area with scenic waterfall, cabanas and barbecues.

Sundial Recreation Center features Arizona's largest indoor swimming pool, its first indoor, air-conditioned shuffleboard courts and its only synthetic-surfaced lawn bowling green.

Bell Recreation Center has a 40,000-volume library and the community's first handball, racquetball and volleyball courts.

Residents pay only \$40 per person per year for use of all recreational facilities. The only exception is bowling at Lakeview and Bell Lanes, where a minimal line rate is charged.

Sun City is truly a golfer's paradise. There are 10 courses in the community, all 18-hole layouts. Three of these are private country clubs and two are par-60 executive courses. The area's 11th course, a 9-hole layout, will be ready for play this fall.

For the green thumbs, Sun City has its Agricultural Gardens, where gardeners can farm a 20 x 40-foot plot with water provided.

The community also has its own baseball-softball stadium. During the spring, Sun City Stadium is training headquarters for the American League Milwaukee Brewers. Then in late spring and summer it becomes the home of the renowned Sun City Saints women's amateur softball team.

Six miles north of town is Heading Ranch, where Sun Citians can take advantage of a trap and skeet range and small bore rifle, pistol and archery ranges. A desert picnic area for residents also has been constructed on the property, with cabanas, tables and benches, a large dance floor, barbecues and running water.

A few miles to the west is Magma of Sun City, a wild game hunting preserve where sportsmen can hunt pheasant and chukar using game dogs.

But Sun City is more than facilities--it's people. People living their retirement years in an active, healthful manner.

Accordingly, Sun Citians have formed more than 300 clubs and organizations. Among these are Sun City's Rhythm Ramblers Band, an all-resident, musical group boasting 19 active members. It plays for Chuckwagon Dinners. Several other resident bands provide music for the Saturday night dances. Other musical groups include the Women's Chorus, Male Chorus, Handbell Ringers, Organ Club, dance bands and Musicians Club.

Dancing is a favorite community pasttime and various clubs feature square, round, continental and ballroom dancing.

The Sun City Players, a thespian group, stages several plays a year.

Card clubs range from bridge and pinochle to euchre, cribbage and whist. Sun City's Rose and Garden Club conducts one of the finest rose shows in the West.

The Sun City Camera Club and Rockhounds visit Arizona's scenic wonders, as do members of the Power Riders motorcycle club and the Horse and Carriage Club.

Many of the clubs are charity oriented. For example, the Sun City Puppet Club, a group of 38 women who sew and sell, has raised and donated more than \$160,000 to children's charities in the Phoenix area.

No list of clubs would be complete without mention of the many service, fraternal, patriotic and church organizations within the community, several of which are the largest and most active in the state.

For cultural entertainment, Sun Citians need look no farther than their own backyards. The Sun City Symphony Orchestra performs five concerts each season. The community's Fine Arts Series brings in top musicians from around the world and its Lecture Series presents well-known celebrities and newsmakers.

One of the area's top attractions is the Sun Bowl, a 7,500-seat capacity outdoor amphitheater. A winter-season Celebrity Series presents such stars as Liberace, Guy Lombardo, Jimmy Durante, Lawrence Welk and his Champagne Music Makers, Roberta Peters, Carol Lawrence, Burl Ives, Roger Williams and Al Hirt to overflowing Sun Bowl crowds.

Interspersed with the headliner shows are free events and concerts, which keep the Sun Bowl busy throughout the years.

Almost every religious denomination is represented in Sun City and more than 25 congregations meet in their own houses of worship or in community halls.

The community also has one of the finest medical facilities in the country in the 200-bed Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital. It features modern circular patient wings with centrally located nurses stations providing visual

monitoring and quick access to every room. The hospital is designed for expansion to 400 rooms. With the recent completion of a third nursing tower--a \$10 million project--Boswell now has a complement of 261 beds.

There are also four medical buildings in town, with the newest, Lakeview Medical Arts Center, having more than 100,000 square feet of office space for doctors, dentists, laboratories, pharmacies, x-ray offices and other medical technicians.

Sun Valley Lodge, the community's first nursing and health care facility, was founded by United Church of Sun City. The new Beverly Manor Convalescent Center, a 195-bed care facility, features three 65-bed wings, two for skilled nursing and one for personal care.

Augmenting the excellent medical services available is Sunshine Service, an organization supported by local charities and directed by Rev. Duane Thistlethwaite. This unique institution loans sick-room equipment and supplies to residents at no cost. The Sunshine Service warehouse has everything from hospital beds, bed pans and exercise equipment to crutches, splints and wheelchairs. There is even a supply of children's beds, chairs and playpens to help out when grandchildren are visiting. Additional services include arranging sick room and hospital visitations, locating nursing aid or a companion, and even arranging emergency loans.

Bordering Viewpoint Lake, one of two lakes in Sun City, is the Lakes Club, a private dining facility with membership limited to Sun City residents and local business people. It features a large dining room overlooking the lake, a comfortable cocktail lounge and a 500-seat capacity banquet room.

Sun City is the home of more than 350 commercial businesses and professional offices, most of them located in the community's six large shopping centers. Construction is scheduled to begin soon on a seventh.

To accommodate visitors, the King's Inn hotel has 100 modern rooms, a swimming pool, Old English dining room, large coffee shop, cocktail lounge and bar.

The Inn also maintains a series of rental apartments that supplement Sun City's Visitor's Vacation Special Plan. Designed to provide prospective buyers with a sampling of Sun City living, the Vacation offers a one week stay (two weeks during the summer) in a comfortable apartment for \$150. The package includes two rounds of golf, a breakfast and Sun City tour, a Chuck-wagon Dinner and guest activity card for use of community recreational facilities.

Sun City West Model Homes border Willowcreek Golf Course. On display are 21 different floor plans featuring four distinctive modes of living. These include single-family homes, duplexes, garden court apartments and foursomes. Base prices for living units range from \$43,990 to \$81,490.

Sun City's financial institutions include 30 branch banks and savings and loan companies and five brokerage houses.

To maintain the beauty and uncluttered cleanliness of the city, a fenced trailer compound has been provided for storage of campers, motor homes, boats, and trailers.

When Sun City's 8,900-acre master plan is completed in 1978 it is estimated that the community will have a population of 48,500. The first phase of Sun City West will cover 5,700 acres, with a projected population of 32,500.

The developer of Sun City and Sun City West is the Del E. Webb Development Co., a subsidiary of the Del E. Webb Corporation. The Development Company President is John W. Meeker. He is assisted by Executive Vice-President Joe Aubin.

The company administrative offices are located in Bell Plaza, 17220 Boswell Boulevard.

Del E. Webb was 75 when he passed away July 4, 1974, leaving an international building, development and management corporation as a lasting monument to his creative genius. Mr. Webb's building achievements range from Madison Square Garden in New York to the Kuilima Hotel in Hawaii, but he often said the one in which he took the greatest pride and satisfaction was Sun City. His pride was justified.

The editor of Arizona Highways Magazine, Joseph Stacey, said in his June, 1974 issue: "We see in Sun City, Arizona, a festival of diverse interests of civic, commercial, social, patriotic and aesthetic endeavors and accomplishments unmatched in promise and performance anywhere in the world.

"Sun City is one of the most wonderful things that has happened in the United States of America. And in a world of beautiful places and wonderful things, that's something very special."

SUN CITY

PROGRESS STORY

September 1, 1979

Only two decades ago the area 12 miles northwest of Phoenix, Arizona, was largely uninhabited. Instead of people, there flourished thousands of acres of cotton and lettuce.

Today the area is the site of Arizona's seventh largest city--Sun City--the world's premiere resort-retirement community and the place some 48,000 persons proudly call home.

The nearly 20-year span in between has been characterized by a commitment that active retirement lends immeasurable quality to one's after-50 years. It's also been characterized by growth, growth so phenomenal, in fact, that sometime during the next 12 months the last house in Sun City will be occupied. The sister-community of Sun City West welcomed its first residents October 16, 1978.

Sun City was the brainchild of the late Del E. Webb, who had parlayed a hammer and saw into a multi-million dollar corporation with interests ranging from construction and land development to hotel operations and property management.

Knowing that persons of retirement-age were more interested in the present than in promises, Webb had built a complete recreation center, a golf course, a shopping center and a hotel with restaurant before the first home was even sold.

The community was an immediate success. During the first week-end of the January, 1960, opening, 272 homes were sold. Thousands of visitors flocked in to see what this new city had to offer America's retirees.

At year-end home sales totaled 1,301 and the community had a population of 2,500. By 1965 the population had risen to 8,000 and it jumped to 15,000 by 1970.



Community facilities have kept pace with this rapid growth. Sun City now has six recreation centers, with the construction of a seventh expected to be completed this summer.

In planning new recreation complexes, several things are taken into consideration. Population growth and frequency of use of existing facilities point up certain needs. The wishes of the residents, determined through surveys, also are used in rec centers planning.

The first recreation center had a swimming pool, shuffleboard courts, a lawn bowling green, arts and crafts studios, meeting and card rooms and an auditorium.

The later complexes include many of these facilities, and have added bowling lanes, miniature golf courses, exercise rooms, weaving rooms, pool and billiard areas, therapy baths, tennis, ping pong, bocci ball, lakes for boating and fishing and a picnic area with scenic waterfall, cabanas and barbecues.

Sundial Recreation Center features Arizona's largest indoor swimming pool, its first indoor, air-conditioned shuffleboard courts and its only synthetic-surfaced lawn bowling green.

Bell Recreation Center has a 40,000-volume library and the community's first handball, racquetball and volleyball courts.

Residents pay only \$40 per person per year for use of all recreational facilities. The only exception is bowling at Lakeview and Bell Lanes, where a minimal line rate is charged.

Sun City is truly a golfer's paradise. There are 11 courses in the community, 10 of them 18-hole layouts. Three of these are private country clubs and two are par-60 executive courses. The area's 11th course, a 9-hole lay-out, opened for play this winter.

For the green thumbs, Sun City has its Agricultural Gardens, where gardeners can farm a 20 x 40-foot plot with water provided.

The community also has its own baseball-softball stadium. During the spring, Sun City Stadium is training headquarters for the American League Milwaukee Brewers. Then in late spring and summer it becomes the home of the renowned Sun City Saints women's amateur softball team.

Six miles north of town is Heading Ranch, where Sun Citians can take advantage of a trap and skeet range and small bore rifle, pistol and archery ranges. A desert picnic area for residents also has been constructed on the property, with cabanas, tables and benches, a large dance floor, barbecues and running water.

A few miles to the west is Magma of Sun City, a wild game hunting preserve where sportsmen can hunt pheasant and chukar using game dogs.

But Sun City is more than facilities--it's people. People living their retirement years in an active, healthful manner.

Accordingly, Sun Citians have formed more than 300 clubs and organizations. Among these are Sun City's Rhythm Ramblers Band, an all-resident, musical group boasting 19 active members. It plays for Chuckwagon Dinners. Several other resident bands provide music for the Saturday night dances. Other musical groups include the Women's Chorus, Male Chorus, Handbell Ringers, Organ Club, dance bands and Musicians Club.

Dancing is a favorite community pastime and various clubs feature square, round continental and ballroom dancing.

The Sun City Players, a thespian group, stages several plays a year.

Card clubs range from bridge and pinochle to euchre, cribbage and whist. Sun City's Rose and Garden Club conducts one of the finest rose shows in the West.

The Sun City Camera Club and Rockhounds visit Arizona's scenic wonders, as do members of the Power Riders motorcycle club and the Horse and Carriage Club.

Many of the clubs are charity oriented. For example, the Sun City Puppet Club, a group of 38 women who sew and sell, has raised and donated more than \$170,000 to children's charities in the Phoenix area.

No list of clubs would be complete without mention of the many service, fraternal, patriotic and church organizations within the community, several of which are the largest and most active in the state.

For cultural entertainment, Sun Citians need look no farther than their own backyards. The Sun City Symphony Orchestra performs five concerts each season. The community's Fine Arts Series brings in top musicians from around the world and its Lecture Series presents well-known celebrities and newsmakers.

One of the area's top attractions is the Sun Bowl, a 7,500-seat capacity outdoor amphitheater. A winter-season Celebrity Series presents such stars as Liberace, Guy Lombardo, Jimmy Durante, Lawrence Welk and his Champagne Music Makers, Roberta Peters, Carol Lawrence, Burl Ives, Roger Williams and Al Hirt to overflowing Sun Bowl crowds.

Interspersed with the headliner shows are free events and concerts, which keep the Sun Bowl busy throughout the year.

Almost every religious denomination is represented in Sun City and more than 25 congregations meet in their own houses of worship or in community halls.

The community also has one of the finest medical facilities in the country in the Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital. It features modern circular patient wings with centrally located nurses stations providing

visual monitoring and quick access to very room. The hospital is designed for expansion to 400 rooms. With the recent completion of a third nursing tower--a \$10 million project--Boswell now has a complement of 261 beds.

There are also seven medical buildings in town, with the largest, Lakeview Medical Arts Center, having more than 100,000 square feet of office space for doctors, dentists, laboratories, pharmacies, x-ray offices and other medical technicians.

Sun Valley Lodge, the community's first nursing and health care facility, was founded by United Church of Sun City. The new Beverly Manor Convalescent Center, a 195-bed care facility, features three 65-bed wings, two for skilled nursing and one for personal care.

Augmenting the excellent medical services available is Sunshine Service, an organization supported by local charities and directed by Rev. Duane Thistlethwaite. This unique institution loans sick-room equipment and supplies to residents at no cost. The Sunshine Service warehouse has everything from hospital beds, bed pans and exercise equipment to crutches, splints and wheelchairs. There is even a supply of children's beds, chairs and playpens to help out when grandchildren are visiting. Additional services include arranging sick room and hospital visitations, locating nursing aid or a companion, and even arranging emergency loans.

Bordering Viewpoint Lake, one of two lakes in Sun City, is the Lakes Club, a private dining facility with membership limited to Sun City residents and local business people. It features a large dining room overlooking the lake, a comfortable cocktail lounge and a 500-seat capacity banquet room.

Sun City is the home of more than 350 commercial businesses and professional offices, most of them located in the community's six large shopping centers. Construction is scheduled to begin soon on a seventh.

To accommodate visitors, the King's Inn hotel has 100 modern rooms, a swimming pool, Old English dining room, large coffee shop, cocktail lounge and bar.

The Inn also maintains a series of rental apartments that supplement Sun City's Visitor's Vacation Special Plan. Designed to provide prospective buyers with a sampling of Sun City living, the Vacation offers a one week stay (two weeks during the summer) in a comfortable, furnished apartment for \$150. The package includes two rounds of golf, a breakfast and Sun City tour, a Chuckwagon Dinner and guest activity card for use of community recreational facilities.

Sun City West Model Homes border Willowcreek Golf Course. On display are 21 different floor plans featuring four distinctive modes of living. These include single-family homes, duplexes and garden apartments. Base prices for living units range from \$52,990 to \$101,990.

Sun City's financial institutions include 30 branch banks and savings and loan companies and five brokerage houses.

To maintain the beauty and uncluttered cleanliness of the city, a fenced trailer compound has been provided for storage of campers, motor homes, boats and trailers.

When Sun City's 8,900-acre master plan is completed in 1979 it is estimated that the community will have a population of 48,500. The first phase of Sun City West will cover 5,700 acres, with a projected population of 32,500.

The developer of Sun City and Sun City West is the Del E. Webb Development Co., a subsidiary of the Del E. Webb Corporation. The Development Company President is John W. Meeker. He is assisted by Executive Vice-President Joe Aubin.

The company administrative offices are located in Bell Plaza, 17220 Boswell Boulevard.

Del E. Webb was 75 when he passed away July 4, 1974, leaving an international building, development and management corporation as a lasting monument to his creative genius. Mr. Webb's building achievements range from Madison Square Garden in New York to the Kulima Hotel in Hawaii, but he often said the one in which he took the greatest pride and satisfaction was Sun City. His pride was justified.

The editor of Arizona Highways Magazine, Joseph Stacey, said in his June, 1974 issue: "We see in Sun City, Arizona, a festival of diverse interests of civic, commercial, social, patriotic and aesthetic endeavors and accomplishments unmatched in promise and performance anywhere in the world."

"Sun City is one of the most wonderful things that has happened in the United States of America. And in a world of beautiful places and wonderful things, that's something very special."

SUN CITY

PROGRESS STORY

August 1, 1980

*Salest one*

Only two decades ago the area 12 miles northwest of Phoenix, Arizona was largely uninhabited. Instead of people, there flourished thousands of acres of cotton and lettuce.

Today the area is the site of Arizona's seventh largest city - Sun City - the world's premiere resort-retirement community and the place some 48,000 persons proudly call home.

The nearly 20-year span in between has been characterized by a commitment that active retirement lends immeasurable quality to one's after-50 years. It's also been characterized by growth, growth so phenomenal, in fact, that sometime during the next 12 months the last house in Sun City will be occupied. A new sister-community called Sun City West welcomed its first residents October 16, 1978 and already has a population of over 6,000.

Sun City was the brainchild of the late Del E. Webb, who had parlayed a hammer and saw into a multi-million dollar corporation with interests ranging from construction and land development to hotel operations and property management.

Knowing that persons of retirement age were more interested in the present than in promises, Webb had built a complete recreation center, a golf course, a shopping center and a hotel with restaurant before the first home was even sold.

The community was an immediate success. During the first week-end of the January, 1960 opening, 272 homes were sold. Thousands of visitors flocked in to see what this new city had to offer America's retirees.

At year-end home sales totaled 1,301 and the community had a population of 2,500. By 1965 the population had risen to 8,000 and it jumped to 15,000 by 1970.



Community facilities have kept pace with this rapid growth. Sun City now has seven recreation centers.

In planning new recreation complexes, several things are taken into consideration. Population growth and frequency of use of existing facilities point up certain needs. The wishes of the residents, determined through surveys, also are used in rec centers planning.

The first recreation center had a swimming pool, shuffleboard courts, a lawn bowling green, arts and crafts studios, meeting and card rooms and an auditorium.

The later complexes include many of these facilities, and have added bowling lanes, miniature golf courses, exercise rooms, weaving rooms, pool and billiard areas, therapy baths, tennis, ping pong, bocci ball, lakes for boating and fishing and a picnic area with scenic waterfall, ramadas and barbecues.

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Bell Recreation Center has a 40,000 volume library and the community's first handball, racquetball and volleyball courts.

Sun City is truly a golfer's paradise. There are 11 courses in the community, 10 of them 18-hole layouts. Three of these are private country clubs and two are par-60 executive courses.

Every Sun City homeowner is an owner of all seven recreation centers through membership in Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc., a non-profit organization. The annual membership fee is currently just \$40 per resident (subject to periodic adjustment to maintain break-even operation).

For the green thumbs, Sun City has its Agricultural Gardens, where gardeners can farm a 20 x 40-foot plot with water provided.

The community also has its own baseball-softball stadium. During the spring, Sun City Stadium is training headquarters for the American League Milwaukee Brewers. Then in late spring and summer it becomes the home of the renowned Sun City Saints women's amateur softball team.

Six miles north of town is Heading Ranch, where Sun Citians can take advantage of a trap and skeet range and small bore rifle, pistol and archery ranges.

A few miles to the west is Magma of Sun City, a private wild game hunting preserve where sportsmen can hunt pheasant and chukar using game dogs under annual membership or day rates.

But Sun City is more than facilities--it's people. People living their retirement years in an active, healthful manner.

Accordingly, Sun Citians have formed more than 300 clubs and organizations. Among these are Sun City's Rhythm Ramblers Band, an all-resident, musical group boasting 19 active members. It plays for Chuckwagon Dinners. Several other resident bands provide music for the Saturday night dances. Other musical groups include the Women's Chorus, Male Chorus, Handbell Ringers, Organ Club, dance bands and Musicians Club.

Dancing is a favorite community pastime and various clubs feature square, round, continental and ballroom dancing.

The Sun City Players, a thespian group, stages several plays a year.

Card Clubs range from bridge and pinochle to euchre, cribbage and whist. Sun City's Rose and Garden Club conducts one of the finest rose shows in the West.

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No list of clubs would be complete without mention of the many service, fraternal, patriotic and church organizations within the community, several of which are the largest and most active in the state.

For cultural entertainment, Sun Citians need look no farther than their own backyards. The Sun City Symphony Orchestra performs five subscription concerts each season. The community's Fine Arts Series brings in top musicians from around the world and its Lecture Series presents well-known celebrities and newsmakers.

One of the area's top attractions has been the Sun Bowl, a 7,500-seat capacity outdoor amphitheater. A winter-season Celebrities Series presents such stars as Liberace, Guy Lombardo, Jimmy Durante, Lawrence Welk and his Champagne Music Makers, Roberta Peters, Carol Lawrence, Burl Ives, Roger Williams and Al Hirt to overflowing Sun Bowl crowds.

This facility will be superceded in September 1980 with the opening of the spectacular 7,169-seat Sundome Center for the Performing Arts in Sun City West. The Sundome, boasting a sound and acoustical system that will make everyone think he's sitting front row center, will host some 120 shows during the 1980-81 season.

Almost every religious denomination is represented in Sun City and more than 35 congregations meet in their own houses of worship or in community halls (27 have completed their own houses of worship).

The community also has one of the finest medical facilities in the country in the Walter O. Boswell Memorial Hospital. It features modern circular patient wings with centrally located nurses stations providing visual monitoring and quick access to every room. The hospital is designed for expansion to 400 rooms. With the recent completion of a third nursing tower--a \$10 million project--Boswell now has a complement of <sup>271</sup>261 beds. *1/4th Tower adds 84*

There are also seven medical buildings in town, with the largest, Lakeview Medical Arts Center, having more than 100,000 square feet of office space for doctors, dentists, laboratories, pharmacies, x-ray offices and other medical technicians.

Sun Valley Lodge, the community's first nursing and health care facility was founded by United Church of Sun City. The new Beverly Manor Convalescent Center, a 195-bed care facility, features three 65-bed wings, two for skilled nursing and one for personal care. The 84-unit Carillons provides catered living facilities for residents who wish to maintain independence and individuality, yet with all necessary services available under the same roof.

Augmenting the excellent medical services available is Sunshine Service, an organization supported by local charities and directed by Rev. Duane Thistlethwaite. This unique institution loans sickroom equipment and supplies to residents at no cost. The Sunshine Service warehouse has everything from hospital beds, bed pans and exercise equipment to crutches, splints and wheelchairs. There is even a supply of children's beds, chairs and playpens to help out when grandchildren are visiting. Additional services include arranging sick room and hospital visitations, locating nursing aid or a companion, and even arranging emergency loans.

Bordering Viewpoint Lake, one of two lakes in Sun City, is the Lakes Club, a private dining facility with membership limited to Sun City and Sun City West residents and local business people. It features a large dining room overlooking the lake, a comfortable cocktail lounge and a 500-seat banquet room.

Sun City is the home of more than 350 commercial businesses and professional offices, most of them located in the community's six large shopping centers. Construction of the first shopping center in the new Sun City West is well underway, with some of the businesses already open. Several banks and savings and loan offices are open on R. H. Johnson Boulevard.

To accommodate visitors, the King's Inn hotel has 100 modern rooms, a swimming pool, Old English dining room, large coffee shop, cocktail lounge and bar.

The Del E. Webb Development Company maintains 326 rental apartments to serve the Sun City West Vacation Special Plan. Designed to provide prospective buyers with a sampling of resort-retirement living, the vacation plan offers a one-week stay (two weeks May 1-December 15) in a comfortable, furnished apartment for introductory rate, ~~\$200~~; return visit rate, ~~\$275~~. On and after <sup>July 8/</sup> December 16, 1980 rates will increase to <sup>210</sup> ~~225~~ for introductory visit and <sup>375</sup> ~~300~~ for return visit. The package includes two rounds of golf, a breakfast and Sun City-Sun City West tour, a Chuckwagon Dinner and guest activity card for use of Sun City West community recreational facilities.

Sun City West Model Homes border Hillcrest Golf Course. On display are 20 different floor plans featuring four distinctive modes of living. These include single-family homes, duplexes, patio apartments and garden apartments. Basic prices for living units (subject to change without notice) range from ~~\$56,990 to \$112,990~~.

Sun City's financial institutions include 16 branch banks, 23 savings and loan offices and five brokerage houses.

To maintain the beauty and uncluttered cleanliness of the city, a fenced trailer compound has been provided for storage of campers, motor homes, boats and trailers.

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